Supporting International Students on Campus

17 High Impact Practices to Ensure Student Success
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# Table of Contents

Advisors to Our Work .............................................................. 7

Top Lessons from the Study .................................................. 11

Essay: Defining Today’s International Student .......................... 13

Navigating Successful Campus Transitions .............................. 25

  Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings ......................... 28
  Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components .................. 35

Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives ............................... 49

  Lesson #3: First Week Refresher ........................................ 54
  Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions ............................... 55
  Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment ..................... 57
  Lesson #6: Just in Time Resources ...................................... 60
  Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach ....................... 66
  Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings .................... 68

Developing Customized Career Resources .............................. 73

  Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal ................................... 76
  Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs ...................... 79
  Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions ........................... 82
  Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives .................................. 84
  Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp ............................ 86
  Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates ................. 89

Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach .................................... 95

  Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies ......................... 98
  Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics ................................ 105
  Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit ..................................... 112

Toolkit Resources ................................................................. 117

  Transition Resources ......................................................... 118
  Academic Integrity Resources ........................................... 143
  Career Development Resources ........................................... 153
  Mental Health Resources ................................................... 171
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The Challenge: Supporting International Students Throughout Their Time on Campus

Institutions across North America are serving greater numbers of international students and discovering as they go the additional resources and services required to serve them properly.

Many institutions have learned the hard way that ramping up their international student population is best done gradually. This gives student support offices time to learn about international student needs and adjust their services to fit those needs.

The initial transition to campus is one of the greatest challenges facing international students. Smart institutions recognize that these students often can’t absorb all of the information they need at orientation. To address this, schools should break up their messages, communicate them to students at strategic times, and provide follow-up reminders.

International students do need a lot of information and support during their initial and ongoing transition to campus. However, they don’t need all of the information immediately upon their arrival. Tell key points to students at the times when they need them most. Choose formats that are suited to their learning needs and reinforce the lessons.

- Visa information
- Arrival logistics
- Key contacts and resources

- Campus orientation
- Basic needs
- Key academic and support services information

- Reinforcement of key messages
- Encouraging students to access campus services
- Addressing common questions and challenges
Top Lessons from the Study (cont.)

The Challenge: Supporting International Students Throughout Their Time on Campus

**Adjusting to North American academic norms poses a challenge to international students and is compounded by other adjustment struggles.**

International students have been, in some cases, labeled as more likely to cheat based on their overrepresentation in academic integrity cases. However, their tendency to violate these policies is more often due to a lack of knowledge about North American academic norms, and can be compounded by factors such as stress, language barriers, and time management issues.

**Identifying and securing a job in the U.S. or Canada is a priority for many international students but proves difficult for a variety of reasons.**

In addition to the documentation burden, international students face an array of cultural roadblocks to securing employment, including: language barriers, unfamiliarity with North American professional norms and workplace etiquette, discomfort with self-promotion, underuse of social media other important networking tools, and prioritization of academic work over career and professional development.

**International students often exhibit significant need for mental health and counseling resources on campus; institutions should take steps to reduce the barriers these students face in accessing them.**

Mental health providers can assist international students with common challenges, such as homesickness, anxiety, and depression. However, international students are often prevented from accessing these helpful services by their concern about stigma or costs associated with them.

---

**Awareness Outreach**
Meet students where they are with information about key resources and services

**Stigma Reduction**
Address stigma head-on with accurate information about confidentiality and cost

**Addressing Crisis Situations**
Put policies and procedures in place to manage any crisis situations that arise
Study Road Map

1  Essay: Defining Today’s International Student

Navigating Successful Campus Transitions
  Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings
  Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives
  Lesson #3: First Week Refresher
  Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions
  Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment
  Lesson #6: Just in Time Resources
  Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach
  Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings

Developing Customized Career Resources
  Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal
  Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs
  Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions
  Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives
  Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp
  Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates

Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach
  Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies
  Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics
  Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

6  Toolkit Resources
  Transition Resources
  Academic Integrity Resources
  Career Development Resources
  Mental Health Resources
Defining an International Student

The number of international students on North American campuses has grown significantly across the past few years and is continuing to do so, but there is no consensus on what an “international student” is. It is a broad term that can be used to refer to many different groups of students, such as: undergraduates, postgraduates, short-term exchange students, and non-enrolled ESL learners, among others.

For the purposes of this research, we are defining an international student as one who is studying at the full-time, undergraduate level in the U.S., Canada, or the U.K., but is a citizen of another country.

Narrowing Down the Scope of Our Study

International Student

...at an English-speaking institution

...that is not in their home country

Studying at the undergraduate level...
International Enrollments Continue to Rise

Across the past few years, international enrollments in the U.S. have rapidly increased, as this data from the Institute of International Education (IIE) illustrates.

This growth has been largely fueled by undergraduates, with their numbers rising by 43% over the past five years.

U.S. Colleges Seeing Increased Demand for Higher Education from Abroad

**U.S. International Student Enrollments**

*Institute of International Education’s Open Doors Report, 2012*

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollments</th>
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<td>2008-09</td>
<td>671,616</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>764,495</td>
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</table>

**A Strong Performance**

- **43%** Growth in international students seeking bachelor's degrees from 2006 to 2011
- **36%** Of current international students in the U.S are undergraduates

“In Canada’s National Interest”

Although Canada’s higher education system is smaller than that of the U.S., it too has been experiencing dramatic enrollment growth among international students, with enrollments increasing from just over 42,000 students in 2001 to more than 95,000 students in 2009.

The Canadian government has been a champion of the international enrollment boom, seeing it as a way to encourage innovation and invest in the nation’s workforce and economy.

International Enrollment Expansion Expected to Benefit Canada’s Economy

**Canadian International Enrollments Grow**

**Number of International Students, 2001–2009**

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>92,881</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>95,590</td>
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</table>

**Government Invests in International Students**

- **$10M**
  - National budget for targeted marketing plans, branding, and web presence (2013 & 2014)

- **$13M**
  - Two-year investment in Mitacs Globalink summer program for foreign undergraduates

**Benefiting National Interests**

“Canada’s labor markets rely heavily on immigrants. We need to recognize the great potential our international students have to help us fill this need. Having global perspective, but being educated and socialized here, they can make significant contributions to our economy.”

Tom Lusis  
University of Guelph

Today’s Students Are Younger and Better Resourced

In addition to the recent upswing in international student enrollments, there has also been a change in the typical student profile. Institutions are increasingly serving students with a much different profile than they were five or ten years ago. Experts point to three key trends as evidence of this shift.

The first trend has been a shift toward younger students. In the past, most of the international volume was at the master’s and doctoral level. These students were often in their mid 20s, had already completed college degrees, and needed less guidance and support. However, as you can see from the IIE data here, that is no longer the case.

Today’s students are younger and better-resourced than their predecessors. In fact, 76% of today’s international students in the U.S. are self-pay or are funded by their government. At a time of scarce dollars at many institutions, aggressive recruitment of international students represents a way to close budget gaps. With an estimated $21 billion annual contribution to the U.S. economy, these students also provide a much needed boost to local communities.

Rising Undergraduate Enrollments Help Close Budget Gaps

U.S. International Student Enrollment Trends

International Growth Rate by Degree Level, 2006-2011

Bachelor’s | Master’s | Doctoral
--- | --- | ---
43% | 21% | 8%

Paying Their Own Way

- **76%** Of international students in the U.S. are primarily funded by their families or governments
- **$21B** Estimated annual contribution to the U.S. economy by international students
- **$8B** Estimated annual contribution to the Canadian economy by international students

Chinese Students Lead the Undergraduate Boom

The second trend characterizing today’s international students is that they are coming from different countries than they historically did. Ten years ago, South Korea and India were the primary places of origin for international students on U.S. campuses. Today, enrollment growth is dominated by Chinese students. And as a result of China’s one-child policy, their college-age students are part of a generation of singletons whose newly affluent parents and, in all likelihood, grandparents are deeply invested—financially and otherwise—in their success.

Other populations on the rise include students from Vietnam, Brazil, and, most significantly, Saudi Arabia.

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Other Nationalities Also on the Rise

![Chart showing international undergraduate enrollment by nationality](chart)

**New Sources of Growth**

*Open Doors Report, 2012*

- **Brazil**: 7K (2005-06), 8K (2008-09), 9K (2011-12)
- **Saudi Arabia**: 13K (2005-06), 13K (2008-09), 34K (2011-12)

Influx of Students with Greater Support Needs

The final trend defining these students is how they tend to be less academically prepared than those we saw a decade ago. These days, institutions are seeing more middle class students, especially among Chinese undergraduates, who either weren’t accepted into one of China’s extremely competitive top-tier universities, or whose parents see a Western education as a way to stand out in a crowded job market back home.

Many of these students—particularly those brought in through the increasingly common use of third-party recruiters—have unrealistic expectations of the institution, and they often find themselves unprepared for the realities of life on a college campus.

New International Students Are Not as Prepared for the Transition

Declining Academic Preparedness

- **46%** Of international applicants to U.S. universities display low academic preparedness
- **62%** Of applicants using third-party agents to gain admission will require additional academic support on campus

Need for New Supports

“We are inviting these students to our global community, but we don’t have the support structures in place to help them succeed.... Our existing on-campus supports are insufficient to meet [their] needs.”

Vice Provost of Student Affairs
Public University

Unrealistic Expectations

“One high-spirited freshman...believed Americans were ‘kind.’ She was excited at making ‘foreign friends.’ Of her new roommate, a Michigan student who had not yet arrived: ‘I already love her.’”

A Freshman Year, Far From Home

Challenges on Both Sides

Despite growing international enrollments, offices serving these students—the International Student Services Office (ISSO) on most campuses—have not kept pace in terms of budget dollars and staffing.

This data, shared with us by Ivor Emmanuel, the International Office Director at UC Berkeley, was gathered as part of a budget request. He used these statistics to make the case that the institution needed to invest more in supporting international students. While somewhat shocking, these metrics from Berkeley are unfortunately not an anomaly.

### ISSO Budget Dollars Received Per International Student Enrolled

*University of California Berkeley, 2003-12*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dollars Per Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ISSO Staffing Ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Student to Advisor Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of California Berkeley</td>
<td>1,513:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>975:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford University</td>
<td>800:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “Metrics” (departmental report, Berkeley International Office at the University of California, Berkeley, 2013); Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Post 9/11 Visa Regulations More Complex

Compounding the need for additional staff and dollars is the reality interviewees frequently noted that there is less time than ever these days for ISSO staff to spend on student support. In the post 9/11 world, visa regulations and immigration documentation requirements in the U.S. have effectively turned most ISSOs into, as one staff member put it, “high tech compliance offices.”

Escalating Regulatory Burden Squeezes Out Student Programs

SEVIS Transactions Booming
Number of SEVIS Compliance Reporting Events and Documents Issued, 2008-12

`Events` `Documents`

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5,304</td>
<td>8,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>14,114</td>
<td>25,752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Becoming a Compliance Office

“The fact is these offices are becoming very high tech compliance offices. The demand for specialized programs for international students is still there, and the need is still there; it’s just the old fashioned concept of the international office being the be all, end all, for international students is going away.”

Director of International Office
Public University

Source: “Metrics” (departmental report, Berkeley International Office at the University of California, Berkeley, 2013); Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Alone in a Strange Land

With the increased regulatory burden staff must shoulder, it is not surprising to see this sobering survey data that emphasizes how isolated and disconnected international students feel on our campuses. This data about the lack of U.S. and Canadian connections being made is even more heartbreaking when you consider the unrealistic expectations many of these students had before arriving about making friends and immersing themselves in American culture.

The statistics and comment shown here reveal that there is more to be done across campus, by a variety of players and units, in supporting international students—whether or not the ISSO reports up through Student Affairs at your institution.

International Students Feel Disconnectected from Campus and Peers

**International Students Isolated from Domestic Peers**

- 73% Of international students in the U.S. report having two or fewer U.S. friendships
- 58% Of international students in Canada report having few or no Canadian friends

**“I Feel Distant No Matter How Hard I Try”**

“In China our friendship was strong and deep. When I have some problems, I can rely on my Chinese friends to help me because we are like brothers. Like I need money, they will lend to me. We would do anything for each other. But Americans keep distance from their friends or family because of privacy. They are nice and friendly. But I feel distant from them no matter how hard I try. I can’t have deep friendship with Americans.”

*Exploring the Experience of Mainland Chinese Undergraduate Students at an American University*

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1) Quotation has been reproduced exactly as written. Any errors are from the original text.

A Complicated Transition

Interviews Highlight a Range of International Student Challenges

Academic Transition

Sociocultural Adaptation

Psychological Issues

General Adjustment

Although the level of Student Affairs involvement in international student recruitment varies considerably across institutions, Student Affairs leaders and their divisions are increasingly finding themselves on the hook for addressing a range of international student issues, including academic support, sociocultural difficulties, psychological support needs, and general adjustment concerns.
“Not Where We Want to Be”

The surge in international undergraduate enrollments has obviously not been spread equally across universities. Institutions vary greatly in the number of international students they’re currently serving and in the rate at which they grew international enrollments. Some schools have had more time to plan and adjust, creating task forces, adding new staff members, and preparing the broader community.

Many more institutions, however, have found themselves having to react on the fly as issues arise, addressing emerging concerns and trying to adapt existing programs to support the new needs of international students.

Rapid Uptick in International Students Creates Challenges for Student Affairs

A Flurry of Planning at Some Campuses…

- Task forces coordinate different units across campus serving international students
- New positions for staff with language skills
- Cultural sensitivity training for existing staff
- Ramped-up ESL support for academically unprepared students

…While Others Find Themselves Playing Catch-Up

- Demand for women-only hours at campus recreation facilities
- Insufficient prayer spaces for Muslim students
- Inability to meet demand for year-long housing
- Lack of protocols in place to address mental health crisis situations

Invest in Student Support After Arrival

“Universities need to invest in the students’ success after they arrive on campus. Most universities have created some level of support, and international centers and special orientation programs are common. However, these programs vary considerably in length, resources and substance. All too often, support for international students seems to exist outside the main academic mission of the institutions.”

“What International Students Mean to Canadian Universities”

Study Road Map

1  Essay: Defining Today’s International Student

2  Navigating Successful Campus Transitions
   Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings
   Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

3  Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives
   Lesson #3: First Week Refresher
   Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions
   Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment
   Lesson #6: Just in Time Resources
   Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach
   Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings

4  Developing Customized Career Resources
   Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal
   Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs
   Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions
   Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives
   Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp
   Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates

5  Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach
   Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies
   Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics
   Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

6  Toolkit Resources
   Transition Resources
   Academic Integrity Resources
   Career Development Resources
   Mental Health Resources
“An Information Dump”

When international students first arrive on campus, they are overwhelmed, in culture shock, and (often) jetlagged. In fact, studies have shown that students from particularly far-flung destinations may be jetlagged for up to two weeks. However, it is at this time that they receive a plethora of information and are required to make a variety of important decisions.

To help students get their bearings, universities have historically tried to accelerate the learning curve by sharing a lot of information upon arrival. While the intentions are good, many interviewees suggest that the reality is an information dump, which is neither effective nor helpful for students.

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### Traditional Orientation Approach Overwhelms Students

![Diagram of orientation approach]

- Jetlag
- Communication Barriers
- International Student
- Information Overload
- Culture Shock

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### So Much To Learn...

- Immigration regulations
- Campus resources
- Classroom culture
- Social norms
- Student code of conduct

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### …So Little Time

“We throw so much information at them at the beginning of the year that orientation is useless. Students can only absorb so much information at once.”

*Director of International Center Public University*
Smoothing Out the Learning Curve

To address this issue, innovative institutions are doing more to smooth out the learning curve. These colleges are developing opportunities to educate and inform new students before they arrive on campus, as well as during strategic moments across the first semester.

The key question guiding these efforts is deciding what international students need to know at each stage of their transition, and then designing their outreach accordingly.

Shift Education to Pre-Arrival and Across the First Semester

Develop Educational Opportunities Pre- and Post-Arrival

- Communicate logistics and basic information to students
- Begin building a relationship between students and primary points of contact
- Reinforce key messages to students
- Encourage students to seek help from campus services as needed

When Do They Need to Know the Information?

“The question isn’t what they need to know, because they need to know it all. The question is when do they need to know what.”

International Center Director
Public University
Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings

Right Time, Right Information

To supplement the lengthy pre-arrival brochures that most institutions send enrolled students, some universities have developed multi-media options. These may be particularly effective for international students who may become overwhelmed by their language barrier in accessing text-heavy materials.

Across the summer of 2013, McGill University hosted two pre-arrival webinars to reduce, as they put it, “the fire hose effect of orientation.” By sharing relevant information with international students while they’re still home, they have the opportunity to integrate and absorb the content, as well as share it with their families. They can also watch and revisit the material at their own pace, and as many times as they wish, if comprehension is an issue.

To develop these sessions, McGill’s ISSO crowdsourced common student questions from various high-traffic units around campus. They then organized the information around two discrete points in a student’s experience: post-acceptance and pre-arrival. Not by accident, these are also two times when students are extremely excited about the institution and responsive to outreach and engagement efforts.

McGill University’s Webinars Emphasize Pre-Arrival Priorities

Provide Information When It Matters Most

Examples of Topics Covered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1: “Now That You’ve Been Admitted”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Introduction to McGill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Immigration Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Budgeting for Your Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 2: “Now That You’re About To Arrive”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Packing for Montreal’s Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accommodations Upon Arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Finding the Essentials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify Common Concerns

1. Ask units around campus to list students’ most common questions
2. Divide content according to students’ pre-arrival timeline
3. Students arrive on campus with fewer basic questions
4. Staff devote less time during orientation to answering basic questions

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Providing a Softer Landing

International Students Arrive on Campus Feeling Prepared

Although the webinars are a fairly recent initiative, initial results have been encouraging. The live synchronous sessions are led by an ISSO staff member, which allows students to ask questions and begin building relationships even before arriving on campus. The webinars have also helped cut down on the number of students walking in to the ISSO with routine questions during orientation, a time when the staff is overwhelmed by paperwork and handling other transition support needs.

For students who can’t join the live webinars, the recordings are archived and made available online, not only allowing more students to access them, but also allowing all students to go back and revisit them if needed. The archived recordings received 2,307 unique page views last year, when McGill welcomed approximately 2,400 new international students to the school, indicating that many students take advantage of the archived recordings.

Recognizing Friendly Faces

“Students come up to me during orientation and say ‘I know you! I asked you that question during the webinar!’”

Fewer Walk-Ins During Orientation

“Our on-call advisors saw a significant reduction in the number of new student walk-ins during orientation, and that’s unheard of! This was great, because one-on-one advising is very labor intensive. We were even able to catch up on email and office work!”

Caroline Guay
McGill University

McGill’s Analytics

| 361 | Incoming students participated in a live webinar session |
| 2,307 | Unique page views of the archived webinar sessions |
Adjusting Content Delivery for Your Audience

There are certainly some benefits to holding a live webinar—such as building initial connections between students and staff—but it may not be ideal in every situation, whether due to staff and timing constraints, or a desire for the resource to be more self-paced.

With that in mind, the University of Wisconsin-Madison launched a self-paced online guide for international students that is housed on the ISSO’s website. The guide covers essential information around campus arrival logistics, immigration paperwork, academic support services, and the surrounding community. Each section also includes a short video of a current international student talking about the topic and giving advice to incoming students. We know that incoming students want to hear from their peers but they also need official and accurate information from the school; they get both with this engaging guide.

The format allows students to access it at any time and from anywhere, and the school has found that 75% of the traffic to the site occurs at times when the ISSO is closed, making it an important supplemental resource.

Multimedia Format Fits with International Learning Needs

University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Pre-Arrival Guide

- Information is streamlined and prioritized
- Graphic, audio, and text elements improve comprehension for English learners
- Page includes personal testimonials
- Pause and rewind functions let students move at their own pace
- Guide is available 24/7

Making Connections Before Campus Arrival

The resources that McGill and UW-Madison have developed focus on the ISSO staff providing key information to students before their arrival in streamlined, multimedia formats. While this contact is important and necessary, international students are also eager to connect with domestic peers before arriving on campus.

To facilitate interactions, ease transitions, and help build students’ language abilities and confidence, the College of William and Mary has implemented a virtual conversation program. This initiative brings together international and domestic students for 10 hour-long Skype sessions weekly over the summer. The program is marketed to international students through an invitation in their acceptance package.

Domestic student volunteers were recruited among those who might have an interest in international affairs, such as study abroad returnees, linguistics majors, and individuals living in cultural housing options.

Skype Conversations Build Friendships and Increase Language Ability

The College of William and Mary’s Virtual Conversation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>One hour weekly Skype conversations for 10 weeks between domestic and incoming international students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>International students receive an invitation card in their welcome package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Domestic participants receive two hours of training before the program begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Program coordinator matches students, responds to emails, and organizes on campus celebration dinner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
In the program’s pilot year, 2012, the coordinator hoped to recruit 20 student participants; and as you can see here, student participation far exceeded that goal.

In addition to encouraging participation numbers, student feedback from both international and domestic students about the program has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, the biggest takeaway for the program coordinator in the program’s first year was that students wanted more opportunities to engage with their partners and additional activities once on campus.

This program is not meant to serve as a replacement for the ISSO or orientation sessions, but rather to be a transition aid and soft touch for incoming international students.

Virtual Conversation Partners Build Student Confidence

Excellent Participation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Number of international students who expressed interest in pilot year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Number of international students who participated in the pilot program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Number of domestic students who participated in the pilot program¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students Embrace Peer Connections²

“I just think I should let you know that this program is fantastic. I’ve been talked with my partner Megan for several times, and it’s really great. We get to know each other share our interest, she also tells me some useful information, and my spoken English is improving. I really appreciate you give us this opportunity to be friends with American students. It’s a brilliant idea! Thank you!”

International Student Participant
College of William and Mary

¹ Some domestic students volunteered to take on more than one international conversation partner.
² Quotation has been reproduced exactly as written. Any errors are from the original text.
Making It Work on Your Campus

We have outlined some of the key steps and considerations for developing a program like this at your campus, including: recruitment of student participants, training for domestic partners, and finding ways to sustain engagement post-arrival.

Please see our Toolkit Resources in Section 6 for more comprehensive guidance on how to develop and implement a virtual conversation partners program on your campus.

EAB Recommendations for Implementing Virtual Conversation Partners

Key Steps

- Recruit strong domestic participants
- Make smart matches
- Maintain engagement

Launching a Successful Skype Partners Program

- Market to domestic students majoring in linguistics, foreign language, or international relations
- Train domestic participants about campus resources and international student challenges
- Match students according to gender, country preferences, or industry of interest
- Require program coordinator to respond promptly to questions and emails from participants
- Build opportunities for post-arrival interactions, such as field trips, social events, and service projects
Many Approaches to Orientation

Although institutions can and should look to better leverage the pre-arrival period, our research showed that the bulk of time, energy, and resources are still invested in campus orientation, and that is unlikely to change in the immediate future. All institutions, however, seem to be wondering what the elusive “ideal orientation” looks like; the program with the right timing, length, and content, that gives international students a good introduction and addresses their immediate needs without overwhelming them.

Ultimately, there is not a perfect, one-size-fits-all orientation. Rather, different institutions have found success with an array of models, depending on the size and make up of their student population. Some schools have done away with a separate dedicated orientation for international students and, instead, integrate them into the regular campus-wide orientation. At the other end of the spectrum, a few schools have developed multiple week dedicated orientations for international students designed to maximize their adjustment.

Most universities, however, fall somewhere in the middle, holding a multi-day dedicated orientation for their international students.

“Best Fit” Model Depends on School, Location, and Student Population

Spectrum of Orientation Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviated Check-In</th>
<th>Multi-Day Dedicated Orientation</th>
<th>Extended Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Students attend mandatory meeting at International Office upon arrival</td>
<td>▪ International students attend separate orientation</td>
<td>▪ Programming takes place across several weeks to maximize student adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Staff focus on SEVIS compliance and immigration documents</td>
<td>▪ Various campus departments give formal presentations on their services</td>
<td>▪ Sessions focus on academic and social acculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Students then integrate into campus-wide orientation</td>
<td>▪ Tailored content addresses international student concerns</td>
<td>▪ Students build relationships through informal opportunities to socialize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

International Student Priorities Upon Arrival

Regardless of the orientation model your institution has in place, it is essential to address students’ basic needs first.

Here, we have adapted Maslow’s hierarchy of needs for international students by mapping common student questions to the various levels of adjustment. One of the central elements of Maslow’s theory is that first layer of needs must be addressed before an individual can engage in higher level issues. In the case of international students, this means that before they can address their greater emotional and social needs, they need to take care of basic needs, like securing housing, buying a cell phone, and finding something to eat.

Tackle Basic Needs First to Pave Way for Greater Engagement

Maslow’s Hierarchy for International Students

Level 1: Basic Needs
- “Where can I get help with my research paper?”
- “Who can I talk to about how stressed I’m feeling?”
- “Where can I get a cell phone to call home?”
- “How do I set up a bank account?”

Level 2: Support, Connection, Resources
- “Where can I get advice on talking to a professor about a grade?”
- “Where can I find other students who are interested in it?”
- “How do I set up a bank account?”

Level 3: Confidence, Empowerment, Friendship
- “I like basketball. Where can I find other students who are interested in it?”
- “Who can give me advice on talking to a professor about a grade?”

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Tackling the Hierarchy of Needs

Using this framework as our guide, we identified three key components that are necessary for a successful campus-wide transition program. We will now consider each of these components in further detail.

Three Major Components of a Successful Transition Program

- **Level 1:** Basic Needs
- **Level 2:** Support, Connection, Resources
- **Level 3:** Confidence, Empowerment, Friendship

Campus-Wide Transition Program Key Components

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Focus on Basic Needs First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop Refresher Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Build Campus Connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focusing on Basic Needs First

The first component of successful transition support is to address students’ basic needs in a hands-on way.

Many schools have implemented organized or guided trips to local stores to help students locate the resources they need upon arrival. For example, the University of Georgia has begun taking groups of students to Walmart during orientation, helping them acquire necessities such as food and bedding, as well as ensuring that they know how to access these resources in the future.

Other schools have organized trips to local stores to help students buy cell phones, get toiletries, and open bank accounts.

To help familiarize students with the Washington, DC Metro system, Marymount University staff and student leaders guide small groups of international students through purchasing a metro card, which can be deceptively tricky, after which they take a short train trip together to a group lunch.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
A Little Taste of Home

International students have a wide range of needs upon arrival, but food has proven to be one of the most important to address. In fact, a survey done at the University of Windsor revealed that food on campus was one of the top reasons international students gave for leaving a university. Whether they’re having trouble adapting to Western meals or simply missing their food from home, this is a challenge for many international students.

To tackle this issue, the University of Guelph created a Food Gap, which provides locations and descriptions for all of the cultural restaurants in the local community. The map is meant to help international students find familiar foods in the community, as well as encourage them to try other local options.

The document is available to students through the ISSO website, student services, and the residence halls.

The staff at Guelph have received great feedback from the local business community about the professional look of the guide. In the future, they hope to get local businesses featured in the guide to contribute to its printing and revision costs.

University of Guelph’s Food Map Provides Range of Dining Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Yum</td>
<td>Thai-Vietnamese</td>
<td>35 Harvard Road Unit 13</td>
<td>767-0719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna Restaurant</td>
<td>German-Canadian</td>
<td>28 Macdonell Street</td>
<td>265-3353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinh Phong Asian Food-Market</td>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>32 Macdonell Street</td>
<td>321-8111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Information

- Lists all cultural restaurants in Guelph
- Provides name, location, and type of restaurant
- Includes easy to navigate map

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
These days, many incoming students see technology as almost as essential as food. For many international students, it is their primary way of communicating with friends and family back home, making it crucial that they are up and running as soon as possible. It is also a primary way they will interact with the university during their time on campus.

Georgia State University uses student volunteers, called Volunteer International Student Assistants (VISAs), during orientation to run a hands-on session for new students in the computer lab. During this small group workshop, international students activate their email accounts and learn how to log in to the course registration system. VISA leaders do a live walkthrough on how to register for classes and are able to troubleshoot any issues that come up on the spot. While the VISA leaders run the session, a staff member is present at each session in case they need any additional information or support.

International students also appreciate the opportunity to ask the peer leaders questions around a variety of topics, such as, “What if I don’t get into a class?” or “How do I approach a professor to talk about a question?”

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**Georgia State’s VISA Orientation Leaders Provide Hands-On Guidance**

**V.I.S.A. Leader Program**

VISA leaders run small group sessions¹ for 10-15 students in a computer lab, where they:

- Help students enter their addresses for SEVIS
- Make sure students’ accounts and email work
- Guide students through course registration
- Troubleshoot any roadblocks that students may encounter

---

**Grateful for Peer Support**

“Thanks to the V.I.S.A. Leaders, I was able to finish the complicated processes for registration. I’m so appreciative of their help.”

“The reason why the whole orientation was so incredibly helpful and fun at the same time are the V.I.S.A. Leaders. They met us all with openness and friendliness, so the fact that we were confronted with hundreds of people we had never met before didn’t even matter.”

*International Students*
*Georgia State University*

¹ These sessions are part of a larger transition program.
“I Don’t Need This…Yet”

While pre-arrival outreach and orientation sessions are extremely important, optimal international student support doesn’t end when classes begin.

International students have a limited capacity to absorb and process information in their first few days on campus. As time passes, they will face new challenges and their issues will become more complex.

Therefore, institutions need to provide some mechanisms for follow-up support across the first semester that go beyond walk-in hours at the ISSO.

**Student Needs Become More Complex as the Semester Progresses**

**Arrival**
- Students are exhausted and overwhelmed
- Focus is on immediate and basic needs

**Classes Begin**
- Students notice differences in academic and social norms
- Students may need to access campus resources to acculturate and succeed

**Mid-Semester and Beyond**
- Deadlines and exams require good time management skills
- Homesickness and isolation may occur; students may benefit from accessing the counseling center or other campus resources

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Providing Follow-Up Support

To address questions or challenges that may arise after orientation, the University of Minnesota developed a mid-semester seminar for international students. This is a one-day event that is mandatory for all new international students, both freshmen and transfers. The main components of the session are: a self-assessment exercise, a small group discussion, peer presentations, and a resource fair.

University of Minnesota’s Mid-Semester Seminar

1. New international students attend a mandatory mid-semester seminar
2. Peer panel includes personal testimonials and challenges overcome
3. Staff lead attendees through a self-assessment and small group discussions
4. Small groups discuss challenges faced, solutions identified, and available resources
5. Attendees then visit a resource fair with various campus units represented
6. Students required to speak with staff from at least three different units

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Engage Them at a Critical Time

The mid-semester seminar is held in the fall, typically in early October, which was a deliberate choice because it is right before most students have midterms. This makes it a great time to raise awareness about campus resources, while still being early enough to reach students before their challenges become overwhelming.

Attendance at the seminar is mandatory; students cannot register for second semester classes until they attend.

There is a makeup option for students who can’t make any of the five scheduled sessions. They are required to schedule an hour-long individual meeting with a designated ISSO staff member. However, staff report that they discourage this option because students get a lot of value out of the small group peer discussions the seminar enables.

University of Minnesota Strives to Proactively Address Student Difficulties

Seminar Logistics

- Held five times in early October from 3:30pm to 6:30pm on various weekdays
- Approximately 100 students attend each session
- One-hour meetings with staff serve as makeup sessions for those who cannot attend
- Estimated total cost is approximately $6,500¹

Timing is Key

“We wanted to get it as close as we could to right before midterms, to give them tools they could use for midterms and beyond. Because, once midterms are done, it’s really difficult to rebound if you’ve been having difficulty during the semester.

“When they come to the Seminar, the idea is that they’ve had a chance to experience education at the University of Minnesota, and what it’s like to be in the classroom, and yet it’s not too late to turn things around if the student is having difficulty.”

Stacey Buachart
University of Minnesota

¹) Excludes staff time.
Timely Session Answers Student Questions

An important element of the seminar’s success is that it is paired with a campus resource fair.

After discussing the challenges they’re facing and brainstorming potential solutions, each group works together with their table leader to create a solutions and resource list.

After all the groups debrief, students are then required to attend the resource fair, located directly adjacent to the seminar. The challenges and solutions that students bring up in the group exercise often map directly to the units participating in the event.

At the resource fair, students receive a form that lists the 15 to 20 campus units in attendance, including the library, the counseling center, and the student engagement office, among others. They are required to visit three unique units, speak with their staff, and get a staff signature on their form. The form includes sample questions and conversation starters since organizers realize that international students might be unsure about how to approach staff, and what to say.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.

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Going Beyond a Coffee Buddy

The final component of an effective campus-wide transition program is to help students build meaningful connections. Our research suggests that peer mentors can play an important role here but are often underutilized.

Most universities offer some version of a peer mentor program for international students, but these programs rarely produce more than surface-level interactions between international and domestic students. There is often a heavy emphasis on one-off social activities, such as coffee hours and themed dinners.

There is also often a lack of training for peer mentors. Where such training exists, it tends to focus on raising awareness of campus resources, while little time is spent on problem-solving and intercultural communication.

Finally, the majority of peer mentor programs are built around orientation activities, with little expectation or accountability around ongoing support and interactions. In many cases, the relationship between the mentor and mentee ends when the semester starts and busy schedules kick in.

Many Peer Mentoring Programs Struggle to Establish Meaningful Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Quo</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Mentoring Programs</td>
<td>Peer Mentoring Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners meet during or after international orientation when students are overwhelmed</td>
<td>Mentors receive extensive training in common issues and available resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction often depends on the initiative of busy domestic partners</td>
<td>Mentors introduce themselves and answer questions pre-arrival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic partners are not trained to provide resources or support to international students</td>
<td>Mentors are present throughout the first year to provide support and guidance through the transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>!</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor/mentee interactions are superficial, sporadic, and brief</td>
<td>Mentors answer important questions, direct student to campus resources, and provide friendship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Developing Comprehensive Transition Support

One exception to the status quo is Carleton University in Canada, which developed a high-impact mentoring program that provides comprehensive transition support.

Even before students arrive on campus, mentors reach out to introduce themselves and serve as the first point of contact for their mentees, often fielding questions about housing, academics, roommates, living in Ottawa, and what to pack for those inevitably cold Canadian winters.

Mentors and mentees continue their relationship throughout the year through orientation activities, regular check-ins, and social programming.

Carleton University's Mentor Program Assists Across the First Year

- **Pre-Arrival**: Mentors develop comprehensive understanding of all student services available to international students.
- **Campus Orientation**: To ensure mentees are engaging in orientation programming and activities, mentors provide close support throughout the week.
- **Ongoing Support**: Mentors develop comprehensive understanding of all student services available to international students.

Partners connect over the summer, with mentors serving as the first point of contact for answering questions. Through consistent check-ins, mentors monitor the progress of their mentees across the first semester, referring them to on-campus support services, as needed.

Participants attend social activities and events together throughout the year.
A Strong Accountability System

One of the aspects of Carleton’s program that stands out is the clearly defined expectations for mentors and the corresponding accountability mechanisms. Mentors are required to check in with their students at regular intervals—generally every week or every two weeks—to identify any challenges they may be facing and help brainstorm solutions.

After each check-in, mentors complete a feedback form, articulating any issues the student raised and noting any referrals made. The forms are then reviewed by the two senior mentors, who are students, and those deemed necessary are elevated to ISSO staff.

This system not only allows staff to identify at-risk or struggling students but also provides data around information gaps and emerging needs that can be addressed in future programming. For example, if many students are raising the same question or articulating the same challenge, staff will consider ways to incorporate that into orientation or other programming in the future.

Carleton’s peer mentors are not paid, though their service is listed on their co-curricular transcript.

High Expectations and Close Supervision Define Carleton’s Program

Regular Check-Ins
Mentors check in with mentees every week to identify any challenges and support needs

Feedback Form
Mentors complete a feedback form after each student meeting, listing challenges discussed and solutions proposed

Staff Oversight
Staff review forms to identify at-risk students and provide follow-up support

Program Changes
Staff use data to assess and make changes to orientation and other ongoing support mechanisms

Feedback Leads to Program Improvements

“It highlights what we’re doing well and what we’re not doing well. Sometimes when our mentors tell us the questions they are getting, we ask, ‘But why are you guys still getting that question? We covered that in orientation.’ If the students went through orientation and they still don’t know, then we need to rethink our orientation presentations.”

John Nelson
Carleton University
“A Win-Win”

While this program provides clear value to incoming international students, EAB recognizes that it also provides benefits for the peer mentors and the institution. For peer mentors, this is a valuable personal and professional development opportunity, as well as a chance to gain exposure to different cultures. This program enables the institution to assess and improve its student programming, as well as provide additional support to international students in a cost-effective manner.

The program’s director is currently in the process of creating formal assessments, as well as working to pinpoint metrics for longer-term tracking, such as participant retention rates.

Carleton’s Program Has a Variety of Benefits

**International Student Benefits**
- Gets a personal point of contact for pre-arrival questions
- Receives ongoing support to ease campus transition

**Peer Mentor Benefits**
- Gains exposure to different cultures
- Develops leadership and coaching skills that are useful post-graduation

**Institutional Benefits**
- Gathers information about common international student needs
- Creates a support mechanism across students’ first year

**By The Numbers**
- 40 mentors and 2 senior mentors participate each year
- Staff find 1:3 to be the ideal mentor: mentee ratio
- Mentors dedicated 5 hours per week to the program
- Mentors receive no compensation; their service is noted on their co-curricular transcript

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Successful Transitions for International Students

To conclude the campus transition section, we have summarized the key themes and recommendations raised so far. The practices we have highlighted vary in the resources and staffing required to implement, so it will be up to each institution to decide what is the right fit and right answer for their students.

EAB Next-Step Recommendations

Quick Wins

- Offer shopping trips to address basic needs
- Develop local food map

Long-Term Strategies

- Develop orientation refreshers and ongoing support programs
- Create orientation refresher sessions
- Invest in comprehensive peer mentoring and ongoing support programs

Provide just-in-time resources and build campus connections
Study Road Map

1. Essay: Defining Today’s International Student

2. Navigating Successful Campus Transitions
   - Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings
   - Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

3. Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives
   - Lesson #3: First Week Refresher
   - Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions
   - Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment
   - Lesson #6: Just in Time Resources
   - Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach
   - Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings

4. Developing Customized Career Resources
   - Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal
   - Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs
   - Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions
   - Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives
   - Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp
   - Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates

5. Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach
   - Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies
   - Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics
   - Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

6. Toolkit Resources
   - Transition Resources
   - Academic Integrity Resources
   - Career Development Resources
   - Mental Health Resources
International Students Face an Array of Challenges

Different Academic Norms

High Pressure to Succeed

Language Barriers

Time Management Issues

Throughout this research, interviewees consistently highlighted how big of an issue academic adjustment is for international students. They face an array of challenges on a daily basis, including: new academic norms, language barriers, and time management issues. International students often fail to anticipate these challenges and, in many cases, find them to be among the most difficult and stressful issues they encounter during their time abroad.

Difficult adjustments include: new teaching methods, reciprocal interactions between students and professors during class, group activities, and new assessment methods, such as class presentations. In one instance, a student reported that it took her several days to prepare for her first 10-minute classroom presentation; something she had not taken into account when planning her schedule.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Differing Expectations and Cultural Norms

One area where international students struggle particularly is with academic integrity.

One private university conducted a multi-year assessment of plagiarism cases on their campus, analyzing violation data from domestic and international students. The university's discovery that international students were overrepresented in academic integrity violations by about nine times echoed what we heard from many other institutions in the U.S. and Canada.

Despite these eye-popping statistics, interviewees emphasized that international students are not any more likely to cheat than domestic students. Rather, many of the problems international students face arise from misunderstandings as to what constitutes academic work in North America, and how these expectations differ from the cultural norms in their home countries.

Language barriers can further complicate the issue. While North American faculty and staff talk a lot about plagiarism and how it violates the community code of conduct, those discussions make unconscious assumptions about students' baseline knowledge of our language and cultural norms.

Academic Integrity Issues Prevalent for International Students

One University’s Statistics

- 4%
  Of the student body is international
- 35%
  Of plagiarism cases involve an international student
- 9x
  Overrepresentation in academic integrity violations by international students

Misunderstanding, Not Misconduct

“There are educational traditions that vary widely around the world, probably more significantly for writing than for any other aspect of a student’s skill repertoire. We may use the same words—we may speak of reading, writing, 'my own work,' etc.—but we mean very different things in Detroit and Dakar, in Tampa and Thessaloniki.

“This is not to say that educationally mobile students don't cheat—of course they do. But the studies I and others have done show that most examples are from misunderstanding and misuse rather than from misconduct.”

Jude Carroll
Educational Development Consultant
Dedicated Orientation Sessions Are the Norm

To tackle this problem, many colleges have invested time and resources in developing sessions on academic integrity as part of international student orientation. These sessions typically consist of PowerPoint presentations that cover topics such as proper citation, acceptable collaboration, the school’s policy on academic integrity, the violation reporting process, and sanctions.

Colleges Front-Load Education About Academic Integrity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation Schedule (Illustrative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
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<td>2:00-2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Typical Session Components**
- Lasts 60 – 90 minutes
- Formatted as a didactic lecture
- Delivered by an academic integrity officer
- Covers topics such as:
  - School Policy
  - Violation Examples
  - Consequences
Content Delivered, Mission Accomplished?

Though presenters may strive to be creative and engaging, the didactic style and content heavy nature of the sessions tend to overwhelm new international students. Students may tune out the presentations because they are jetlagged, don’t have the language skills yet to follow along, or lack the immediate context as to why this topic is relevant.

While orientation presentations are the norm, some schools are looking for new ways to draw attention to and reinforce this important content.

Typical Academic Integrity Sessions Overlook Student Barriers

- **Language Barriers**
  *What does “plagiarism” even mean? We have no equivalent for this word in my language!*

- **Orientation Exhaustion**
  *I can barely stay awake! I still feel like this is the middle of the night!*

- **Study Skills**
  *I know I read that somewhere, but I didn’t write down where!*

- **Culture Shock**
  *Everything is so different here. I want to go home!*

- **Cultural Barriers**
  *In my culture, we value helping our classmates so we can all succeed as a group.*

- **New Academic Norms**
  *This is the way we cite at home, so it’s probably okay here, too.*
Lesson #3: First Week Refresher

A First Week Refresher

Like many schools, Pacific Lutheran University includes a session on academic integrity as part of its international student orientation. To reinforce the importance of the topic, however, they have also developed an academic integrity refresher session that is held during the first week of classes.

The refresher incorporates both a quick review of the most relevant information from the orientation presentation as well as time to answer student questions. Offering this refresher after classes have begun allows students who have likely just received their first assignments and syllabi to ask questions that have arisen in their classes or conversations with other students.

Typical topics that students have raised in these sessions have included library resources, academic culture, classroom norms, and questions about how to interact with faculty.

Pacific Lutheran University Provides Supplemental Information

Key Session Components

- **Timing**
  - Refresher provided during the first week of classes
  - Content is more relevant now that students have their first assignments
  - Session is early enough in the year that students have time to attend

- **Q&A Opportunity**
  - Attendees have an opportunity to ask questions that have arisen since orientation
  - Students can discuss potential scenarios or case studies
  - Staff explain the two most common types of violations

- **Peer Panel**
  - Panelists include peer mentors and leaders of student cultural groups
  - Attendees ask peers about classroom norms
  - Panelists highlight key themes through personal examples

Establishing a Relationship

“Peer panelists not only have an impact in the moment but also build my relationship with new international students…More students come find me in the library now with their questions.”

Amy Stewart-Mailhiot
Pacific Lutheran University
Developing a Tiered Approach

Another model for spacing out content regarding academic integrity comes from the University of Oklahoma, where they have implemented a tiered approach. While they currently use this model in their bridge program, EAB feels that it could be easily adapted for use with first-year international students.

The tiered approach consists of three sessions of varying length and information depth. The first session lasts less than 15 minutes during orientation and is intended to be a quick and informal introduction to the concept of academic integrity.

The second session takes place during the first two weeks of classes, at which time staff members present more detailed information on academic integrity as well as real-life examples. The goal is to get students thinking about how they would react in real-life situations, such as having a friend ask to borrow answers for an assignment due the next day.

The final session is a more technical discussion about how cheating is discovered, reported, and punished, and also builds in time for Q&A. By this point, international students are more comfortable asking questions because they have seen the staff multiple times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session I</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Introduction to academic integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session II</td>
<td>60 to 70 minutes</td>
<td>First two weeks</td>
<td>Case studies and self-reflection exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session III</td>
<td>45 to 60 minutes</td>
<td>First four weeks</td>
<td>Process for reporting violations and imposing sanctions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University of Oklahoma’s Academic Integrity Sessions

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Making It Work on Your Campus

The University of Oklahoma’s sessions are currently built into a bridge transition program, and there are several factors to consider if you are interested in trying a program like this at your institution. Important elements include: developing a content timeline, exploring ways to drive student attendance, and ensuring sufficient staff time to develop and run the program.

Please see our Toolkit Resources in the final section of this volume for more comprehensive guidance on how to develop and implement a tiered academic integrity education program on your campus.

EAB Recommendations for Implementing Tiered Educational Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Steps</th>
<th>Aligning Academic Integrity Workshops to Academic Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop content timeline</td>
<td>✅ Identify the best session timeline for your campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a point of contact</td>
<td>✅ Divide material according to session timing and content depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive attendance</td>
<td>✅ Use the same presenters for all sessions so that students can build a relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✅ Market sessions through emails, video screens, and peer leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✅ Explore options to make attendance mandatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aligning Academic Integrity Workshops to Academic Progress

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment

Waving A Red Flag

Because international students don’t necessarily anticipate the difficulties they will face in adapting to academic norms, they are often overconfident and, as a result, unaware of their blind spots. To uncover knowledge gaps and help students think through real-life situations, Minnesota State University, Mankato requires new international students to review a web portal on academic integrity and complete a self-assessment prior to their arrival on campus. The portal is hosted by the university’s course management software, so staff can track students’ time on the website and verify that they have actually completed the assessment.

Then, during international student orientation, students have the opportunity to discuss their quiz results, ask questions, and compete for prizes in a 90-minute workshop.

Readiness Assessments Can Alert Students to Their Blind Spots

Minnesota State University, Mankato’s Pre-Arrival Portal

- Online portal dedicated to academic integrity
- Content covers student responsibility statements and community standards
- Module is required, participation tracked through course management software
- Content and readiness assessment help students understand academic integrity basics and citation resources

Sample Question
Ben is writing a report for his English class. Which of the following are correct ways that Ben could cite from his original source?

Campus Orientation Emphasizes Discussion and Hands-On Activities

- Students participate in a 90-minute orientation session on campus
- Activities include small group discussions, role play exercises, and a competition
- Session incorporates a peer testimonial of a fellow international student speaking about coming to the U.S. and encountering new academic norms

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Advantages Extend Beyond Arrival

What stands out about Mankato’s tactic is how they have created a blended format that fits well with the learning needs of international students. The web portal and self-assessment allow students to move at their own pace through the content, while the orientation session creates opportunities for group discussions and interactions with upperclass students.

Since implementing this approach in the fall of 2011, Mankato has seen decreases in both the number and severity of academic integrity violations by international students.

Early Education Yields Lasting Benefits

Web Format Easier for International Students

“They’re inundated with information when they come through orientation, and everyone has a different learning style. We wanted to create something that could work for everybody, something that they could access on their own time, at their own pace.”

Mary Dowd
Minnesota State University, Mankato

100%
Of international students complete the portal quizzes

50%
Reduction in academic integrity violations by international students

Overall decrease in severity of academic integrity violations as observed by student conduct director
Session Content Fades with Time

Even the most robust educational initiatives face the perennial problem that as students get farther away from the training session, the material becomes hazier. While domestic students are often familiar from high school with online resources such as Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) that can help when questions arise, international students often aren’t.

Although most institutions have information available about academic integrity, the research process, and citations online, it can be difficult to find one central place with easy to access information. Far too often, the information is spread out among a variety of units, such as the academic integrity office, the writing center, the library, and academic support services, posing a serious barrier for international students looking for answers to critical questions, often at stressful or hurried times.

Educating Students About Just in Time Resources

International Students Less Aware of Common Academic Resources

Domestic Students
- Used Purdue OWL in high school
- Practiced MLA citations when writing research reports
- Aware of typical academic support services, such as tutors, libraries, and writing centers

International Students
- Unfamiliar with English language resources
- Practiced culturally different citation styles
- Unaware of typical academic support services, such as peer tutors and writing centers

Where to Go When the Library’s Closed

“Instructors need to acquaint international students with the places they can turn to for help. They need to know that even if it’s the middle of the night, they can go somewhere and look up the rules.”

Teddi Fishman
Clemson University
Lesson #6: Just in Time Resources

Creating Just In Time Resources

As a result, EAB strongly encourages institutions to provide just in time resources for international students. Our research surfaced three main strategies: quick reference guides, syllabus templates, and dedicated websites.

Three Approaches for Follow Up Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach #1</th>
<th>Approach #2</th>
<th>Approach #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick Reference Guides</td>
<td>Syllabus Templates</td>
<td>Dedicated Website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approach #1: Quick Reference Guides

While it is decidedly low-tech, a hard-copy quick reference guide can be an extremely valuable resource for international students. The simplicity and ease of access make it more likely a rushed, stressed out student will look to it, if available.

Consider developing a quick reference guide, like the University of Vermont’s, to hand out to students at orientation or the library for their easy reference. While the guide likely won’t be able to hold all of the information students may need, it can cover the highlights and direct them to a website for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When writing</th>
<th>You must show where you got your ideas; CITE sources</th>
<th>You must NOT use other people’s writing or ideas without their permission</th>
<th>If you do not cite sources, it’s called PLAGIARISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When gathering data</td>
<td>You must use the results that you have</td>
<td>You must NOT make up or change results</td>
<td>If you make up or change data falsely, it’s called FABRICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When completing coursework</td>
<td>You must only work together if the instructor allows you to</td>
<td>You must NOT work together if you are told to work alone</td>
<td>If you work with another person but were told to work alone, it’s called COLLUSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When taking tests or completing coursework</td>
<td>You must follow the guidelines provided by your instructor.</td>
<td>You must NOT use materials that are not allowed.</td>
<td>If you do not follow the guidelines your instructor has provided, it’s called CHEATING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Something to Refer to...

“Especially for the international students, it can be helpful to have something to hold on to. And if we three-hole-punch it, they’ll stick it right in their binders now!”

Amy Stewart-Mailhiot  
Pacific Lutheran University

Source: “Academic Integrity: Quick Reference Chart” (ethics guide, University of Vermont), accessed August 20, 2013,  
http://www.uvm.edu/cses/AI%20quick%20reference%20chart.pdf;  
Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
At Simon Fraser University, the academic integrity coordinator and her team recently finished a complete overhaul of the academic integrity website for international students. The new site is more engaging, includes videos of faculty discussing the importance of integrity, and features a comic strip with simple language and game elements to help educate international students about academic integrity in an interesting way.

To promote the new site, the academic integrity coordinator rewrote the school’s syllabus template on academic integrity, which all faculty will be mandated to include on their syllabi. It has simplified language and directs all students to the new website instead of the school’s academic integrity code, since the site will not only have explanatory resources, but also be more accessible and appealing to international students.

The syllabus template is an important just in time resource as it will appear on each syllabus, ensuring that it is in front of students nearly every time they are doing classwork.

### Proposed New Syllabus Statement

SFU’s Academic Integrity Website [http://students.sfu.ca/academicintegrity.html](http://students.sfu.ca/academicintegrity.html) is filled with information on what is meant by academic dishonesty, where you can find resources to help with your studies, and the consequences of cheating. Check out the site for more information and videos that explain the issues in plain English.

### A New Website Created for Diverse Student Audiences

[Image of the new SFU Academic Integrity website]
Approach #3: Dedicated Website

Paper resources can be an effective way to keep information in front of students but the fact remains that, these days, students are going to be looking for information online. For that reason, it is important for institutions to develop a centralized place for academic integrity information and guidance, like Georgetown University did.

The keys to the site are that it’s easily accessible, contains comprehensive information, and provides guidance for students who still have questions after reviewing it.

Georgetown University’s Portal Helps Students Quickly Find Resources

I never had to write a research paper back home!

Getting Started With Research

- 15 Steps to Good Research
- Use the Research & Course Guides to identify possible sources of information in many types and formats

Where to Go for Help on Campus:

- Georgetown University Library—Research and Reference Help
- Writing Center
- Honor Council

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

- What is Plagiarism?
- Avoiding Plagiarism (Purdue University Online Writing Lab)
- Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It (Indiana University)

Citation Styles and Online Writing Resources:

- Online tools for managing and formatting your footnotes and bibliography
  - The Library’s guides to citation formats:
    - MLA
    - Turabian Footnote/Endnote Style
    - Turabian Parenthetical Reference Style
  - Purdue University Online Writing Lab

We have no equivalent for “plagiarism” in my language!

I prefer to learn face to face.

The library’s closed!
“Which Approach Is Right for My Institution?”

The three approaches summarized here are not necessarily mutually exclusive; any one or combination of the three might be the right fit for your institutions, depending on your student body, staffing, and available resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach #1</th>
<th>Approach #2</th>
<th>Approach #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quick Reference Guides</strong></td>
<td><strong>Syllabus Statements</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dedicated Website</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Low resource investment</td>
<td>- Already used at many schools</td>
<td>- Allows for 24/7 access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Easy to create and update</td>
<td>- Frequently reviewed by many students</td>
<td>- Multimedia format serves different learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Drawbacks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Potential Drawbacks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Potential Drawbacks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires students to keep track of paper handout</td>
<td>Often requires approval from faculty committee</td>
<td>Requires coordinating with web team to launch and maintain site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
“That’s What Friends Are For”

While creating academic integrity guides and websites are great starting points in connecting students with resources, a handful of universities are also looking to tap into peer networks to spread this information. These institutions recognize that when students have questions they usually look to each other or peer leaders for guidance. This tendency is even more pronounced for international students who are often unfamiliar with North American campus support services and don’t have family nearby to consult.

International Students Rely on Peers for Information and Support

72%

Of international students reported they would turn to a peer for advice first

Students Respect Older Peers

“I could be standing up there and telling them the exact same thing, but when the information comes from one of their peers, they pay far more attention. Because they’ve been through the same experience, students see them as more legitimate.”

International Office Director
Public University

Common Support Networks

- Friends in the residence halls
- Students from the same country on campus
- Other international students
- Cultural student groups
EAB uncovered two distinct strategies for leveraging peer networks; the first comes from the University of Oklahoma and the second from the University of California, San Diego.

At the University of Oklahoma, academic integrity staff members offer on-demand presentations for student organizations. The sessions vary in length and focus on topics such as time management or study skills, while seamlessly blending in content on plagiarism, citation, and the research process. Feedback on the sessions has been overwhelmingly positive and student groups have actually begun requesting them. Moving forward, the staff are analyzing demographic and violation trend data to surface groups that might benefit from the sessions; they will then work proactively with student leaders to schedule workshops for these groups.

In contrast to Oklahoma, at UCSD, students are taking the lead through the Academic Integrity Matters! (AIM) group. The organization hosts several events throughout the year, including a study break during finals and a creative arts competition around integrity. They also do tabling at various campus events throughout the year.

### Proactive Peer Network Outreach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strategy 1: Seek Out Existing Networks</th>
<th>Strategy 2: Forge New Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>University of Oklahoma</td>
<td>University of California, San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Presentations to student groups are tailored to their culture, raising awareness among the peer group about community expectations and campus resources</td>
<td>Circulate academic integrity information through peer delegates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>Academic integrity officer presents at club meetings, by request, for 5 to 45 minutes</td>
<td>AIM! (Academic Integrity Matters!) student group organizes promotional events such as a creative arts contest and finals study break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Ranges from a quick introduction to a full overview of plagiarism and its consequences</td>
<td>Focuses on recalibrating social norms around cheating and promoting good study habits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many Students Don’t Know the Consequences

Despite an institution’s investment in time and resources in educational sessions and proactive outreach, academic integrity violations are still going to happen by both domestic and international students. What many international students fail to realize, however, are the serious consequences that sanctions can have on the future of their education.

At many institutions, any student who commits an academic integrity violation receives a warning letter. In some cases, the student may be required to complete either an online module or an in-person course.

A second violation usually carries more serious penalties including academic probation, suspension, or dismissal. For an international student, the consequences of a second violation tend to be more severe. While a domestic student often has the option of moving home and working for a semester, a suspension for an international student could mean the end of their academic career, since U.S. visa regulations give them just 10 days to leave the country upon losing their enrolled status.

Sanction Process Can Yield Tougher Effects for International Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Student</th>
<th>International Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An academic integrity violation is committed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student receives an email warning</td>
<td>Student receives an email warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student chooses not to seek out campus resources</td>
<td>Student confused by email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student commits second violation and receives suspension</td>
<td>Student commits second violation and receives suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visa regulations force student to leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student can return after a few months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Helping Students Get Back on Track

To reinforce the seriousness of the situation and to educate students about the resources available to help avoid a second violation, the University of Minnesota has developed a special initiative for international students.

When an incident is reported to the academic integrity office, all students—domestic and international—receive a letter informing them of the violation. The letter mailed to international students, however, also informs them that they are required to make an appointment with the academic integrity office within five days of receiving the letter.

University of Minnesota’s Mandatory First Violation Meetings

Dear Student,

A report alleging that you engaged in scholastic dishonesty has been submitted to our office by [reporting party]. In cases involving scholastic dishonesty, instructors have the responsibility to determine whether or not a student has violated the conduct code, assign an appropriate sanction, and report the incident to our office.

Our office requires international students to meet with us to discuss University standards and expectations. Our records indicate that you are an international student and therefore we require a meeting with you. Please call our office within five business days to schedule an appointment to discuss this matter. In the meeting we will discuss this situation, steps of the disciplinary process, your rights as a student, and resources available on campus.
Customized Referrals Address Individual Needs

During the mandatory appointment, staff work to understand the reason for the international student’s violation and connect the student with the appropriate resources. Referrals might be to the advising office, the tutoring center, or the counseling center. The student then has five days to visit the required support service and return to the academic integrity office with a document signed by a unit staff member.

University of Minnesota’s Meetings Connect Students to Resources

1. Speak informally with the student to assess verbal English ability
2. Ask the student to explain the situation that led to the violation
3. Explain students’ rights and responsibility to the conduct code
4. Refer student to an appropriate campus resource for follow-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosed Cause</th>
<th>Referred Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Course Load</td>
<td>Academic Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills</td>
<td>Learning Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Counseling Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation Practice</td>
<td>Writing Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
A High-Impact Strategy

Overall, Minnesota’s approach does a nice job of emphasizing the seriousness of the issue and using the situation as a teachable moment for international students who may not understand how to address the underlying issue to avoid another violation in the future. Minnesota was happy to report that recidivism has been almost zero since implementing these meetings.

Minnesota also reported that, though some feared there would be pushback from the campus community because this practice only applies to international students, that was not the case. In fact, university administrators see this approach as an added service touch and retention tool for international students, and one for which students have expressed extreme gratitude.

Informal Meetings Produce Numerous Benefits

- **73** Average international student cases per year
- **1.5** Estimated hours per week for international student meetings
- **3** FTE in conduct office process all cases of scholastic dishonesty

**Leveling the Playing Field**

“Our approach helps level the playing field. [Otherwise] it’s not fair to expect that students from other countries would understand the seriousness of this process.”

Sharon Dzik  
University of Minnesota

---

1) Results of data 2009-13.
Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives

EAB recommends that all institutions assess their data and student needs to identify what strategies and interventions would be most effective on campus. We have provided here a summary of the practices profiled in this section, some of which can be easily implemented for a “quick win,” and some of which will require a longer-term investment of time and resources.

### EAB Next-Step Recommendations

**Quick Wins**

- Rethink channels for educational outreach

**Long-Term Strategies**

- Develop tiered academic integrity sessions
- Implement first violation meetings for international students

- Create a quick reference guide or dedicated website
- Leverage peer networks to spread information about campus resources
## Study Road Map

**1. Essay: Defining Today’s International Student**

**2. Navigating Successful Campus Transitions**
   - Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings
   - Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

**3. Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives**
   - Lesson #3: First Week Refresher
   - Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions
   - Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment
   - Lesson #6: Just-in-Time Resources
   - Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach
   - Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings

**4. Developing Customized Career Resources**
   - Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal
   - Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs
   - Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions
   - Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives
   - Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp
   - Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates

**5. Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach**
   - Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies
   - Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics
   - Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

**6. Toolkit Resources**
   - Transition Resources
   - Academic Integrity Resources
   - Career Development Resources
   - Mental Health Resources
Meeting Student Demand for Postgrad Employment

While initial and transitional support represents some of international students’ greatest needs, research shows that they are increasingly focused on career prospects both during the recruitment process and once they arrive on campus. Survey data from both the U.S. and Canada shows that many international students hope to stay and work in those countries after graduation.

However, while these students are eager to find employment in North America, they encounter a variety of obstacles in the process, including complex visa regulations, employers unwilling to sponsor them, and differences around cultural norms and workplace expectations.

Many International Students Want to Stay But Face a Variety of Obstacles

Hoping To Stay After Graduation

- **57%** Of international students at one representative U.S. university hope to stay in the U.S. after graduation
- **51%** Of Chinese international students surveyed in Canada would like to stay in the country after graduation

Common Barriers to Employment

- Complicated visa restrictions
- Language difficulties
- Lack of personal ties and networking skills
- Differences in cultural norms
- Employer reluctance in hiring international students

As past EAB research has shown, there is a wide variety of career information, programming, and activities available on most campuses. However, many of these resources are more difficult for international students to access, for a variety of reasons. As one career director suggested put it, “It is so easy to think we’ll just get the international students to go to what’s already being offered, and that will prepare them. But, I think that doesn’t do justice to the facts, recognizing that international students come from a very different social, cultural, and economic climate.”

Attending some of the existing events on campus may in fact be more discouraging than helpful for international students, who become overwhelmed by language or cultural barriers, as well as the realization of what it will take to find a job in their host country.

**Typical Career Programs Don’t Address Unique International Needs**

**Resume Workshops**
- Challenges for International Students
  - Different cultural norms around CVs versus resumes
  - Need for individualized guidance around country-specific differences
  - Language and writing skills

**Career Fairs**
- Challenges for International Students
  - Identifying companies that hire international students
  - Different cultural norms around personal space and small talk
  - Unfamiliarity with career fair logistics

**Networking Events**
- Challenges for International Students
  - Lack of confidence in approaching employers
  - Nervousness around making conversation with strangers
  - Reluctance to self-promote when talking to recruiters

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
We Can Help You

The starting point in helping international students understand the range of services available on your campus is to develop a dedicated website to help them begin their search and direct them to available resources.

Northeastern University’s website does an excellent job of providing simple, clear, comprehensive guidance to international students. Their dedicated career page is easy to find from the university’s homepage and the ISSO’s website. The page clearly lays out all of the resources and services available, walks students through the various ways the office can support them in their search, and outlines a “top ten” list of tips for international students seeking an internship, co-op, or job.

Northeastern’s Dedicated Online Portal for International Students

Welcome to Career Services. We can help you.

- Make sense of the American internship and job search process
- Learn to identify your skills, find job postings and match your skills to postings
- Prepare materials -- an American style resume and cover letter
- Build a network and effectively use networking contacts
- Prepare for interviews and follow up
- Learn cultural differences that can help you to succeed in securing professional employment

An American internship, co-op or even a credible volunteer experience in your field is extremely valuable after-graduation employment in the U.S. You will have to search for and compete for these department will help with a co-op search. If co-op is included in your program or curriculum participating, please meet with your co-op advisor first. For general information about co-ops:

- All students except CPS students, please see: Northeastern Experiential Learning
- CPS students, please see the following link: Northeastern CPS Internships & Co-ops

Top Ten Tips for International Students Seeking Internship

Key Website Resources

- Top 10 tips for the international student job search
- Guide to resources available online and in the office
- Visa information and requirements
- International Alumni Success Panel videos
- Contact information and walk-in hours

Source: http://www.northeastern.edu/careerservices/services/international/
Alumni Advice on the Global Job Search

Another key feature of an effective dedicated website is making international students feel engaged and empowered in their job search process. Whereas Northeastern does a nice job of outlining their office's resources, the University of Birmingham emphasizes peer and alumni examples. Recognizing that international students are more likely to pay attention and be engaged if they can see themselves in the content, the site prominently features alumni blogs, case studies, and student profiles. International students are eager to hear from their peers that have gone before them, and appreciate the tangible examples of how alumni have leveraged available resources for a successful job search.

University of Birmingham Highlights Case Studies and Profiles

Common International Student Questions

“What will make me stand out in a competitive job market?”

“How do I portray my international background as an advantage?”

“What on-campus resources should I make use of?”

The Power of Student Voices

“I realized my CV needed to be reconstructed and learned that what I previously phrased as ‘international exposure’ is best phrased as ‘multicultural awareness!’ On a personal level, I discovered the importance of learning the local culture and of trying to integrate by getting involved in the Community.”

International student case studies: Gloria Okemu

Gloria Okemu is an international student from Nigeria. She studied Law at the University of Birmingham. You can read about her experience by following her blog posts below:

- Gloria’s blog: job hunting and networking
- Gloria’s blog: first UK work experience
- Gloria’s blog: attending the Law Fair
Everyone Just Assumes You Know This Stuff

While international students face a number of challenges in their career development and search process, including visa issues and language barriers, career staff argue that the cultural barriers are often the biggest obstacle. These barriers significantly affect international students’ ability to prepare for and engage in a Western job search.

EAB research uncovered three key areas where forward-thinking career offices are developing customized programming to help address specific international student needs.

| Cultural Barriers Create Job Search Roadblocks for International Students |
|---|---|---|
| **Career Fairs** | **Networking Events** | **Social Media** |
| **Common Roadblocks** | **Common Roadblocks** | **Common Roadblocks** |
| - Lack of preparation | - Unfamiliarity with networking norms in America | - Unfamiliarity with social media platforms |
| - Lack of confidence in approaching potential employers | - Little experience making small talk in a professional setting | - Underappreciation of the promise and perils of social media in the job search |

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Demystifying the Career Fair

Universities typically host large-scale career fairs on campus as a key part of the job search process. Often, these events are the primary way students are exposed to potential employers. While these fairs can be confusing and overwhelming for domestic students, they are even more so for international students, who struggle with issues ranging from selecting proper attire to a lack of confidence in approaching recruiters.

To address their international students’ needs, Johnson & Wales University launched a two-pronged approach to career fair preparation. The first component is a workshop that is held two days before the fair. It covers topics including: researching employers, identifying priority companies to approach, acceptable standards for business attire, and protocol for professional behavior in the U.S..

This workshop is paired with a guided tour of the career fair that takes place 30 minutes before the fair opens. A career services staff member explains the layout and introduces the students to some of the employers—who are told beforehand this will happen—to help break the ice.

Johnson & Wales’s Workshop and Guided Walkthrough Ease Students’ Nerves

Career Fair Prep Workshop
- Learn to research companies and job openings
- Identify top three employers to approach
- Practice behavior for professional interactions

Guided Fair Walkthrough
- Tour fair space and identify high-priority companies
- Review personal and professional etiquette
- Make introductions to select employers

Clear Need for Customized Services

“When we started to look more into the cultural differences that these students are coming with, there did seem to be some common themes that differentiated domestic students from international students as to how they knew how to prepare for and navigate a career fair.”

Director of Career Services
Private University

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Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
A Little Preparation Makes a Big Difference

While this practice is still relatively new at Johnson & Wales, the feedback from both students and employers has been very encouraging. The workshop and guided tour are a relatively light lift on the part of career center staff but one that can be very meaningful for the students who participate.

Johnson & Wales was excited to share that one prominent employer reported seeing a noticeable increase in international students’ confidence at the event and hired a record number of international students in the program’s first year.

Benefits for Students and Employers

**Student Benefits**
- Increased confidence in personal and professional etiquette
- Guidance in identifying and approaching high potential employers

**Employer Benefits**
- Opportunity to surface high-quality candidates
- Meaningful interactions with well-prepared job-seekers

**Employers See the Difference**

“We received feedback from one of the employers last year who has hired our international students, that they definitely saw the difference in the students’ confidence level. They hired more international students from our school this year than they ever had in the past. These students are getting great jobs.”

*Sheri Ispir*

*Johnson & Wales University*
Networking Is Not Easy for International Students

Beyond career fairs, there are often a variety of networking events offered on campus to help students connect with alumni, employers, and community members. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics suggests that these informal opportunities are incredibly important as 70% of jobs are reportedly found through networking.

However, networking is a daunting concept even for domestic students, who struggle with how to approach complete strangers and ask them about their careers.

Therefore, it is not surprising that this is even more difficult for international students. In addition to possible language barriers and general nerves, many of them are not familiar with the awkward North American concept of “selling yourself” to potential future employers through self-promotion.

A “Foreign Concept” for Many Individuals

Networking Is King

| 70% | Percent of all jobs found through networking |
| 80% | Percent of all jobs never advertised |

You Think You’re Scared…

“The feedback we get all the time from domestic students is that networking is the scariest part of the job search. They just don’t feel comfortable. So you can imagine how an international student feels about it.”

Director of Career Development
Private University

Key Challenges for International Students

- Language barriers
- Unawareness of the importance of networking
- Lack of confidence
- Unfamiliarity with North American professional etiquette

Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions

Giving Them a Practice Run

To improve international students’ soft skills and boost their confidence for networking, the University of Birmingham in the UK offers networking pre-wire sessions. Each November, the career office holds a networking event specifically for international students and individuals who wish to attend must apply. If they are accepted—which about 50 students are each year—they are required to participate in a pre-event workshop.

At the session, staff walk through the objectives and expectations for the event. They also lead students in a group exercise during which students “work the room,” practicing how to start a conversation or join a group that is already talking. The session allows international students to practice their introductions and networking skills in a safe, low-risk environment, giving them, in effect, a dry run before the actual event.

Feedback from students, staff, and employers has been overwhelmingly positive. In particular, employers note that because students are prepared in advance, they’re able to have meaningful dialogues with high quality students, instead of the free-for-all that some on-campus networking events can be.

University of Birmingham’s Networking Pre-wire Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Process</th>
<th>Mandatory Prep Session</th>
<th>Networking Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students email explaining why they want to attend</td>
<td>Advisor outlines objectives and expectations for the event</td>
<td>International recruiters attend event held on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career advisor picks most suitable candidates</td>
<td>Advisor discusses norms and how to make small talk</td>
<td>Students arrive at event appropriately dressed and prepared to network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in mock networking exercise</td>
<td>Students identify high-priority employers and practice making an introduction</td>
<td>Students know which employers to target and feel confident approaching them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Networking Goes Online

While Birmingham’s pre-wire session gets international students ready for face-to-face networking, these days social media and online platforms are increasingly playing a bigger role in connecting students, alumni, and employers. In fact, in 2013, 16% of U.S. employees reported finding their current job through an online social network and 37% of employers reported using social networks to screen potential job candidates.

Although international students may be comfortable using social media for personal interactions, they don’t necessarily understand how it can be integrated into the job search process.

As a result, international students are missing out on opportunities to network online, failing to leverage robust university LinkedIn groups or identify promising industry contacts to reach out to.

Social Media Playing a Larger Role in the Job Search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of recruiters use or plan to use social media in their recruitment efforts in 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of recruiters have made a hire through social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of U.S. employees found their current job through an online social network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top Social Media Sites Used to Vet Job Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Sites</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LinkedIn Alumni Groups Growing

- The University of Michigan’s alumni group has 55,788 members
- McGill University’s alumni group has 20,223 members
- George Washington University’s alumni group has 26,224 members

Creating Social Media Intensives

At Johnson & Wales, the career services staff noticed several years ago that international students were not attending the series of social media workshops they offered, opting instead to participate in more process-oriented job search sessions.

To reach students with this important material, they decided to build a social media component into their current job search overview session for international students. They thought this approach would maximize their reach as well as save staff time. The content has been so well received that staff now spend approximately 80% of the overview session on social media.

The social media session is designed to be hands-on and interactive. They hold the overview session in a computer lab so staff can walk students through registering for LinkedIn and creating a profile. Staff also discuss how students can protect their online reputation in the job search.

Johnson & Wales Delivers Complete Job Search Preparation

“The Job Search” Workshop

Key Features

- Visa status and immigration considerations
- Job search tools and resources
- Resume writing and interviewing skills
- Importance and potential of social media networking

Hands-On Learning

- Staff explain the use of social media as an HR tool
- Attendees build a basic LinkedIn profile during the session
- Students learn how to connect with alumni and people in their industry via LinkedIn
- Staff discuss how students can protect their online reputation in the job search
Overrepresented at “How To” Sessions

Like Johnson & Wales, many institutions report that while international students will show up for resume-writing and job search workshops, they are less likely to take advantage of resources or services they see as non-essential, even though career center staff and job search experts might disagree. As a result, they often don’t take advantage of the full range of personal and career development opportunities that you make available to them. Ultimately, this means that these students are missing out on important steps in the career exploration process.

Resumes and Mock Interviews Attract International Student Interest

**International Students Focus on Job Search Mechanics…**

**A Snapshot at One School (Illustrative)**

![Bar graph showing student attendance at job search basics and networking workshop.](image)

115
9

**Job Search Basics**

**Networking Workshop**

…And Fail to Access Full Range of Career Development Opportunities

- Self-Assessments
- Job Shadowing
- Networking Events
- Cultural Workshops
- Informational Interviews
- Social Media Training

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
To broaden international students’ exposure to the career development process, Northeastern University piloted a half-day boot camp in March of 2013. The event was open to both undergraduates and graduate students.

The event introduces students to the multiple facets of a global job search in a compact and time-efficient manner, making it easier for busy and academically focused international students to fit into their schedules. It consists of four career development workshops, an international student alumni panel, and a networking session.

Northeastern’s Global Job Search Boot Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Job Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen Your Resume, Strengthen Your English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching a Global Start-Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>H-1B Basics with an Immigration Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Success Panel &amp; Networking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Features

- Consolidated one-day format
- Exposure to multiple facets of the job search
- Chance to hear from successful international alumni
- Networking opportunity to connect with alumni, community members, and staff
Access to Alumni Insights

The international alumni panel is one of the key features of the event. It brings back former international students, who successfully navigated the U.S. hiring process, to talk about keys to their success and lessons learned. During the session, each panelist gives a brief autobiography and then the moderator asks a few prepared questions before opening the floor to attendees.

Common student questions range from the logistics of the job search process to the professional norms in an American workplace.

The panel is recorded and put online afterward so students can access the content later.

International Student Success Panels Answer Pressing Questions

Panel Videos on Northeastern’s Webpage

1. Panelists give their name, hometown, degree, and job

   The moderator poses a few questions such as, “What helped or surprised you with interviewing?”

2. Attendees ask panelists their own questions during open Q&A

   Commonly Asked Questions
   - How did you bring up the need for an H-1B or OPT?
   - How did you research companies to know who hires international students?
   - How did you find your company and opportunity?
   - What have you learned on your job about differences in the American workplace from your country?
   - How did you network?
A Worthwhile Investment

Overall, the boot camp was a success in its first year, particularly as measured by attendance. Whereas one-off offerings of the same sessions in the past attracted, on average, about 75 students, when offered as part of the boot camp, they had more than 170 participants.

Student feedback on this inaugural event was also extremely positive. 100% of attendees indicated that they would recommend the boot camp to a friend, signaling that international students found the session a valuable use of their limited time.

Initial Results Overwhelmingly Positive

Consolidated Format Benefits Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>75</th>
<th>→</th>
<th>170</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average attendance at stand-alone H-1B workshops offered in the past</td>
<td>Number of attendees at the H-1B workshop offered as a session at boot camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Satisfaction

100%

Of participants surveyed said they would recommend the event to a friend

Costs Are Minimal

“Half of these sessions already existed as standalone international student workshops, and we used guest speakers for the new ones, so most of the work for the event was marketing-focused. Also, it is all held on campus, so logistical costs are minimal.”

Ellen Goldman
Northeastern University

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Bundling Existing Programs

While Northeastern is focusing its efforts on the time-efficient boot camp, the University of Delaware has developed a different strategy to incentivize students to take advantage of more of their career development resources. They implemented a certificate program with three core elements. It requires students to attend a series of workshops (covering topics such as university job search resources, interviewing skills, and networking, among others), upload their resume for a peer critique, and attend a campus networking event.

The certificate is offered twice per year and students who don’t fulfill all of the requirements in a single semester can complete them the next semester.

Delaware’s approach bundles together pre-existing services and resources, providing international students with clear requirements, a timeline, and an incentive for completion.

This program is a low-resource way to help students who are overwhelmed about where to start in the job search process, and can help all students take better advantage of all the career resources available at your institution.

University of Delaware’s Certificate Offers Career Development Incentives

- Attend Dedicated Career Workshops
  - Resume writing
  - Job search tools
  - Interviewing skills
  - Networking
- Upload Resume for Peer Review
  - Submit resume to peer reviewer
  - Update resume incorporating feedback
- Attend One Networking Event
  - Private event held on campus open to employers hiring international students

Career Skills Certificate

Program Goals

- Increase attendance at dedicated international student workshops
- Encourage international student use of a greater range of career development resources
- Provide more consistent information to international students
- Provide international students with a more seamless and integrated service experience
A New Marketing Strategy

Following a change in ISSO staff last year, Delaware’s career office is undertaking a concerted marketing effort this year to promote the certificate program to international students. Based on attendance at this year’s first certificate workshop, up from 12 to 65, things are off to a promising start.

In addition to the real developmental benefits this program confers on its participants, completing the certificate program may also have a positive signaling value to employers, demonstrating that the international student is aware of the cultural differences in the workplace and committed to improving their personal and professional skills.

Initial Success for Delaware’s International Student Career Skills Certificate

Targeted Marketing
- Marketing primarily comes from the Office of International Student Services
- Communication presents the workshops as a series and emphasizes the benefits of the certificate
- Early promotion makes students aware of the series soon after they arrive on campus

Promising Initial Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average resume workshop attendance before offering certificate</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at first resume workshop in certificate series</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anticipating Positive Employer Response

“The certificate can be added to their resume, which we think employers will receive well. Employers tell us that in their experience interacting with international students, sometimes the behaviors in certain areas can be different than students that are more familiar with the job search in the U.S., and we’re hoping this program will fill that gap.”

Matthew Brink
University of Delaware
Memorial University Provides Intensive Career Preparation

1. Eight classroom sessions teach basic job search skills and professional etiquette
2. Sessions are uploaded to student portal so participants can access them for later review
3. Students must attend one networking event in the community or on campus
4. Participants attend a mandatory on-campus networking event
5. Students gain off-campus exposure through mandatory volunteer requirement
6. Participants receive certificates at a closing ceremony

Founded on a similar incentive-based theory, but a more comprehensive initiative requiring significantly more staff time is the 10-week Professional Skills Development Program offered by Memorial University in Canada.

The program launched in 2010 after career center staff observed that they were receiving the same questions again and again from international students. These students all wanted to stay in Canada after graduation and were concerned about how best to prepare and present themselves in a very competitive job market.

Key components of the program include eight classroom sessions, two networking events, and mandatory volunteer activity.

Students must formally register for the certificate program and attend all events. Students missing more than two workshops must reenroll in the program the following semester.

After each session, all content is uploaded to an online platform so students can download and print all of the related resources and presentations.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis
Volunteer and Networking Features Set Program Apart

The volunteer service requirement is one unique component that sets Memorial’s program apart. This requirement helps international students gain valuable work experience without having to deal with burdensome visa restrictions and hiring criteria.

The career office connects students with opportunities by providing them with a list of suggestions, as well as referring them to the student activities bureau, who will spend time matching individuals with opportunities that match their interests. Students also have the option to complete the requirement through Make Midterm Matter, an initiative that takes place during semester breaks and offers campus community service opportunities for students who are not going home.

Not only does the volunteer requirement give international students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the local community and with a professional setting, but the extra-curricular activity looks good on their resumes. A 2011 LinkedIn survey found that one in five hiring managers have selected a candidate because of their volunteer experience.

### International Students Gain Valuable Professional Skills

- The career office provides a list of suggestions for volunteer opportunities on campus and in the community
- International students choose from a variety of organizations including the SPCA, a local farmer’s market, and numerous on-campus options
- Students may also fulfill this requirement via Make Midterm Matter, which facilitates community services opportunities during semester breaks

### Student Outcomes

- Gain knowledge about the local community and work culture
- Improve resume with extra-curricular activities
- Build personal and professional networks

### Hands-On Experience

“The hands-on experience, I think, is what helped. You know, the actual, practical work. For some it’s just exposure, it’s the first step to explore this environment and see what it’s all about.”

**Lynn Walsh**
Memorial University

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Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Memorial University’s program has experienced notable growth in the two years since its launch. They have awarded more than 350 certificates and generated considerable buzz on campus, which is impressive for a fairly low-cost initiative.

Staff estimate that they spend just $500 per term on the program, excluding their own time. The majority of that money is spent on food for the networking events and the certificate ceremony. One compromise they’ve had to make to keep the program so low-cost is to limit transportation they provide to off-campus networking events.

Two coordinators in the career office staff the program part-time; they estimate that they spend, over the course of the semester, an average of seven to eight hours per week on the program. They also have one student worker who puts in about 40 hours total on the program, performing all of the data uploading and helping out with resume reviews toward the end of the semester.

This high-impact program helps international students increase their understanding of the career development process, gain hands-on experience, and build their confidence.

---

**Giving Students Confidence in the Job Search**

### Impressive Results

- **33%** Of program participants are undergraduates
- **353** Certificates awarded since the program’s inception in 2010
- **$500** Amount per term spent on the program¹

### Great Word of Mouth

“On applications for the program now, we often see comments like, ‘I’m applying because I talked to my friend who did it last year, and he feels so much better now.’”

Julie Bowering
Memorial University

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¹ Excludes staff time.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Developing Career Services for International Students

International students’ career development needs vary widely, and the most appropriate way to serve them will depend on your institution type, campus location, and student body.

Here, we have outlined a number of practices to consider implementing on your campus, depending on these factors as well as available resources.

### EAB Next-Step Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quick Wins</th>
<th>Long-Term Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt=" Trophy Icon" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt=" Triangle Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximize the effectiveness of your institution’s existing resources</td>
<td>Develop dedicated services for international students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Launch a dedicated website for international students</td>
<td>- Customize preparation for networking events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conduct career fair tours for international students</td>
<td>- Implement comprehensive skills development program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Study Road Map

1. Essay: Defining Today’s International Student

2. Navigating Successful Campus Transitions
   - Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings
   - Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

3. Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives
   - Lesson #3: First Week Refresher
   - Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions
   - Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment
   - Lesson #6: Just-in-Time Resources
   - Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach
   - Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings

4. Developing Customized Career Resources
   - Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal
   - Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs
   - Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions
   - Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives
   - Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp
   - Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates

5. Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach
   - Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies
   - Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics
   - Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

6. Toolkit Resources
   - Transition Resources
   - Academic Integrity Resources
   - Career Development Resources
   - Mental Health Resources

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Adapting to a New Environment

On top of the adjustment challenges that all students face when they arrive on campus, international students must also adapt to an entirely different educational system and a new daily environment, which can compound their existing stress and create additional barriers to adjustment. Data from a 2012 NASPA survey highlights some of the stressors faced by international students on campus, such as: believing their classroom contributions are less valued, struggling to develop healthy peer relationships, and experiencing discrimination or micro-aggressions from the broader community.

International Students Face Many Adjustment Challenges on Campus

Greater Adjustment Risks

“In addition to adjusting to a new educational system and a new social environment, international students face unique sources of stress such as homesickness, culture shock, immigration requirements, and strenuous academics. Because of the constant need for cultural adjustment and for coping with all the stress, international students are at greater risk for various psychological problems.”

Academic Stress Among College Students: A Comparison of U.S. and International Students

Psychological Struggles for International Students

2012 NASPA Survey

- Believe their classroom contributions are valued less
- Feel insensitivity from faculty and staff
- Struggle to develop healthy peer relationships
- Experience prejudice from the broader campus population
- Don’t feel their financial needs are met by the institution


Unaware of Counseling Resources

However, while international students often report levels of anxiety and depression that are higher than their domestic peers, they are far less likely to seek help. One of the biggest challenges for universities is raising awareness among international students about campus support resources.

Data shown here from one institution shows the gap between students in need of mental health resources and those that are accessing them. While this institution had 74% of students reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression, only 4% had used campus counseling services and, even more concerning, 27% of respondents were unaware that free mental health counseling was available on campus.

Unfortunately, these numbers seem not to be outliers, but rather fairly consistent with the situation on many campuses in North America.

An Array of Barriers Prevent International Students from Seeking Help

- Lack of awareness about campus resources
- Cultural differences
- Worries about cost
- Confidentiality concerns
- Tendency to seek academic or medical help

Revealing Survey at One Private University

74% Of surveyed international students displayed symptoms of anxiety or depression
4% Of international students had ever used campus counseling services
27% Of respondents had never heard of the free mental health counseling available on campus

Source: Xuesong Han, Xuemei Han, Qianlai Luo, Selby Jacobs and Michel Jean-Baptiste, "Report of a Mental Health Survey Among Chinese International Students at Yale University," Journal of American College Health 61, no. 1 (2012). Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
This lack of awareness about counseling services is not a new issue. Institutions have invested considerable amounts of time, staff energy, and resources in proactive mental health outreach, especially in the wake of the tragedies at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. Most universities discuss health and wellness—and related available resources—during international student orientation. These sessions typically cover topics such as campus resources, costs associated with treatment, and reasons that students might seek help. While these orientation sessions are a crucial first step, they fall prey to the same enemy as content we’ve discussed earlier in this study—simply that students are tired, overwhelmed, and unable to absorb all that they’re hearing. As a result, universities are looking for ways to reinforce these messages across students’ time on campus.

Orientation Presentations Only the First Step

Mental Health Information Session
- What is mental wellness?
- Resources available on campus
- Confidentiality and cost of services
- Reasons to access services

Need for Continued Outreach
- Students are tired, jetlagged, and overwhelmed
- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers
Informal Encounters Put Students at Ease

In addition to the important initial overview session, some institutions are having counseling center staff play more informal roles at orientation by attending special events, participating on panels, joining students for lunch, and helping with move-in. This approach allows students to get to know counselors in more casual settings, making them less intimidating and more approachable in the future. It also enables staff members to talk to students one-on-one or in small groups about what counselors do, the services that are available, and the types of situations they have helped students with in the past.

Creating Space for More Casual Interactions Between Students and Staff

Informal Events

- Lunch with counseling staff at orientation
- Counseling center staff participate in ISSO events
- Informal staff outreach to international student organizations

Benefits of Casual Interaction

“Students respond to knowing a face, but they become overwhelmed by the parade of sessions at orientation. Having lunch with staff puts them at ease and lets them get to know each other in a casual setting.”

Counseling Center Director
Private University

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Meeting Students Where They Are

Collaborative Programming Brings Resources Directly to Students

Once orientation concludes, co-programming is an effective way for the counseling center to reach students in an informal and non-threatening way. The counseling center can partner with different units on campus—the ISSO or the academic support office, for example—to offer sessions on topics that appeal to international students, such as time management or stress reduction.

Similarly, many institutions offer coffee hours to encourage interactions between international students, domestic students, faculty members, and staff. At some institutions, counseling center staff will casually participate in these events or, in some cases, even volunteer to lead a wellness-themed discussion, focusing on topics such as proper sleep hygiene or making American friends. While these topics are fairly mainstream and non-threatening, they still allow staff to reach students with important wellness information.

These conversations help students connect by allowing them to share their experiences, and give staff the opportunity to highlight available services as well as follow up individually with any students they feel might benefit from additional support.

Topics to Incorporate

- Time management
- Academic stress
- Language difficulties

Topics to Incorporate

- Homesickness
- Cultural differences
- Social isolation

Build Relationships to Encourage Use of Services

“Our International Student Office sponsors monthly coffee hours that give international students an opportunity to meet faculty and students from across campus. Staff from the counseling center attend these coffee hours to meet with international students in an informal setting, making it easier for these students to seek help from us in the future.”

Mental Health Counselor
Public University
Raising Visibility Across Campus

The University at Buffalo’s International Student Wellness Day

Goal #1
Increase international students’ awareness of emotional and physical well-being

Goal #2
Clear up common misperceptions about wellness services

Wellness Day Key Features
- Participating offices include the Counseling Center, Wellness Education, and Health Services
- Afternoon event held in central campus location
- Tables for each participating office with informational resources and activities
- International student photo exhibition
- More than 300 students attended

Creating a Space for Connections

“Students tell us that they appreciate the opportunity to meet people from so many different countries. They are able to discuss feeling isolated and realize that others are feeling the same way. They realize they are not alone in this adjustment to American customs.”

Xuhua Qin, PhD
Tufts University

1) Xuhua was at the University at Buffalo in 2010 and 2011 and lead the planning and implementation of Wellness Day; she is now at Tufts University.
Making It Work on Your Campus

If you are interested in organizing a similar event at your institution, some of the key considerations to keep in mind are: identifying important campus units to include, incorporating hands-on activities, raising awareness among students about the event itself, and selecting a convenient time and location.

EAB feels that the ideal time to hold an event like this would be the fall, when students have begun to settle in but may be in greater need of support as they’re dealing with some of the challenges and adjustment issues common in international students.

Considerations for Developing an International Wellness Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Steps</th>
<th>Implementing a Successful Student Wellness Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit a variety of campus units</td>
<td>✅ Invite campus units that represent all facets of student wellness to participate, expanding the focus beyond mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate hands-on activities</td>
<td>✅ Market the event as an overall wellness and community event to make it more student-friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage peer support</td>
<td>✅ Provide onsite services to international students such as vaccines and mental health screenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify optimal time and location</td>
<td>✅ Offer interactive education activities to drive student engagement with various campus units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✅ Invite student groups, such as Active Minds, NAMI, or your international student organization to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✅ Consider holding the event in the fall, when students are more receptive to information and in need of support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Building Collaborative Cross-Campus Partnerships

While student outreach is an important component of raising awareness about campus resources, it is also important for the counseling center to have strong relationships and good communication channels with faculty members as well as other campus units, including the ISSO and academic support services.

In many cases, students are more likely to reach out to a faculty member, the ISSO, or a campus spiritual leader when they are experiencing distress. With this in mind, the University of Florida formalized these relationships, creating a group known as the International Initiatives Team. The group’s members are drawn from units that see a high volume of international students, including the career center, residence life, and several colleges.

The team meets monthly to discuss challenges students are facing, troubleshoot problems, and develop collaborative programming.

University of Florida’s International Initiatives Team

- International Center
- Dean of Students’ Office
- Counseling and Wellness Center
- Student Leader Representative
- College of Engineering
- College of Business
- Department of Housing and Residence Education
- Student Legal Services
- Police Department
- Career Resource Center
- Victim Advocate
- Graduate Student Council

Key Elements

- Composed of representatives from units with high volume of international student interactions
- Group meets monthly to discuss specific challenges and service approaches
  - Formal monthly meetings
  - Ongoing informal consultation
- Team has developed a range of international student programming
  - Student Success and Visa Workshops
  - Social event listserv
  - Global Coffee House
  - International student support group
  - Consultations with immigration lawyers
Frequently Heard Concerns About Counseling

While raising awareness of campus resources is an important first step in reaching students, it is only the first challenge in engaging international students with mental health resources. Stigma associated with seeking mental health support is another real barrier that must be addressed with international students. There are a variety of ways that stigma manifests itself and makes international students resistant to seeking mental health counseling, including: misconceptions about services, cultural barriers, and financial concerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stigma Is a Big Obstacle for International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Misconception of Services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Don’t all counselors give their patients shock therapy?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Barriers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>There’s no way an American could understand my problems.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affordability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I’m already paying so much for tuition, I can’t afford anything else!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gossip and Shame</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My parents would be so embarrassed if someone discovered me in therapy!</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Confidentiality, Privacy, and Cost

One of the most frequently cited concerns for international students in seeking help is privacy and confidentiality. International students’ concerns range from fear that peers or faculty members will find out they are seeking help, that visits will be officially reported, or that their families and communities at home will find out and feel shame.

To tackle stigma head-on, Michigan State University developed a website for international students with frequently asked questions about counseling services. The website includes a video of a Chinese PhD student explaining the available services, describing issues they can help with, and talking about her own experience as an international student.

The website explains confidentiality and discusses what happens with information shared during sessions. It also explains the costs and emphasizes that all students are entitled to eight free counseling sessions each year.

Michigan State University’s Website Addresses Top Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics Covered in the Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Counseling…what is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ How can counseling help me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ What is confidentiality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Who would I be talking to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ How much does service cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ How do I make an appointment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Office contact information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reducing Barriers to Access

Cornell University’s Satellite Offices Facilitate Drop-In Consultations

Another way to combat stigma is to change the student counseling experience. Recognizing that many students are hesitant to come into the counseling center—whether it’s because they find it intimidating or embarrassing—Cornell University’s created the Let’s Talk program, which created informal satellite offices across campus that offer free walk-in sessions.

Locations for the program were chosen because they receive a lot of student traffic and are areas where students generally feel comfortable, such as the dining hall and the student union. They also included offices associated with hard-to-reach demographic groups, including the ISSO, the Engineering School, and the Law School.

The drop-in sessions are free and open to all students.

“Let’s Talk” in Brief

- Walk-in hours available every day
- Hosted by nine offices around campus
- One location in the ISSO
- Friendly, informal consultations with counseling staff
- Anonymous option available

Schedule for “Let’s Talk” Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mondays</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:30pm</td>
<td>International Student Support Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:30pm</td>
<td>Student Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:30pm</td>
<td>Dining Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesdays</td>
<td>2:30 – 4:30pm</td>
<td>Law School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Going to the Students

“Our counselors go to where students live and work.”

Greg Eells
Cornell University
Reaching a Difficult Demographic

Assessment data from the Let’s Talk program suggests it is effective in reaching international students because they are more likely to visit satellite locations than the main counseling center. While international students make up just 10% of Cornell’s student population, they represent 24% of Let’s Talk participants.

Since Cornell developed and implemented Let’s Talk in 2002 as part of a campus-wide initiative addressing mental health, more than 30 institutions have adopted the program on their campuses. The program has proven effective at institutions varying greatly in size, location, and student body.

International Students More Likely to Access “Let’s Talk”

Results of “Let’s Talk”

296 Students visited “Let’s Talk” in 2009-10

24% Of visitors were international students

“Let’s Talk” Program Adapted by Other Schools

- Columbia College, Chicago
- Montclair State University
- San Francisco State University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois, Chicago
- University of Notre Dame
- Williams College
- Wayne State University

Recognizing the Mind-Body Connection

While a program such as Let’s Talk makes it easier for students to access help, it still requires that they are aware of and open to counseling services. Some international students who are experiencing depression or anxiety will still resist seeking help. They may, however, be more likely to go to the university health center, seeking assistance for physical manifestations of mental health issues, such as fatigue, headaches, or insomnia.

International Students Interpret Mental Distress as Physical Symptoms

Mental Distress Can Present as Physical Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Symptoms</th>
<th>Possible Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Appetite</td>
<td>Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Weight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble Sleeping</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Chinese international students, therefore, often seek help for their physical complaints, such as sleep disturbances…. If such physical causes are not found, they probably will not continue to seek alternative causes or services that are mental health in nature.”

Addressing the Mental Health Problems of Chinese International College Students in the United States

Implementing the PHQ-9 Questionnaire

All Students are Screened at Primary Care for Mental Health Distress

To take advantage of this opportunity to reach students, some schools now administer a depression questionnaire, known as the PHQ-9, to all students who visit the health center, regardless of the reason for their appointment.

The results are evaluated on the spot by a clinician and students with a high “depression severity” score are immediately referred to the counseling center.

By screening students in the health center, institutions can proactively identify and offer mental health resources to distressed individuals who would likely never have walked into the counseling center on their own.

PHQ-9 Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the past two weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of these problems?</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Many days</th>
<th>More than half of days</th>
<th>Nearly every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little interest in doing things</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling down or hopeless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble falling asleep</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PHQ-9 Scorecard

PHQ-9 Scoring Card for Severity Determination

**Scoring:** add up checked boxes on PHQ-9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Depression Severity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 4</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 19</td>
<td>Moderately Severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 27</td>
<td>Severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Growing Number of Schools Use PHQ-9

The PHQ-9 Survey is now used by over 30 schools who are members of the National College Depression Partnership. To date, more than 150,000 students have been screened through the program.

The national results of this initiative have been extremely promising so far. 95% of students identified as being at-risk by the survey initiated treatment with counseling services within four weeks, and 50% of those students achieved functional recovery—defined as a downshift in severity on the scorecard—within 12 weeks.

Primary Care Screenings Help Students Recover and Be Retained

Schools Using PHQ-9

- Michigan State University
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Sarah Lawrence College
- Tufts University
- Baruch College
- Case Western Reserve University
- Columbia University
- Louisiana State University

National Results of PHQ-9

150,000+
Students screened nationally to date

95%
Of students discovered to be at risk initiated treatment within four weeks

50%
Of students in treatment achieved functional recovery within 12 weeks

Hitting the Breaking Point

Despite proactive outreach efforts and stigma reduction initiatives, some international students will still resist seeking help. As a result, they tend to be overrepresented on some campuses in number of crisis appointments and psychiatric hospitalizations.

Often, these students wait until they hit a breaking point and the situation becomes a crisis. Once this happens, there are far fewer options available in terms of resources, support, and solutions.

International Students Don’t Seek Help Until They Are in Crisis

More “Crisis” Appointments at Counseling Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>International Students</th>
<th>Domestic Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling appointments considered “crisis”</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greater Rate of Psychiatric Hospitalizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>International Students</th>
<th>Domestic Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students hospitalized for psychiatric reasons</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fewer Solutions Once It Becomes a Crisis Situation

“Stigma prevents international students from seeking counseling until they get to the point of disaster…whereas had they asked for help from the beginning, it sort of would have been solved.”

Mental Health Issues Amongst International Students in Australia: Perspectives from Professionals at the Coal Face

Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

Working with International Students of Concern

As an unfortunate result of this reality, in addition to awareness raising and stigma reduction efforts, institutions must put key support structures in place so they can more easily manage crisis situations with international students when they do occur.

In particular, EAB research identified three areas where institutions are revisiting their policies and procedures.

Three Areas of Crisis Response

1. Sharing Information with the Campus BIT
2. Communicating with Families Abroad
3. Campus Separation Logistics

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Collaborating Across Campus

The first decision an institution must make is how to structure information sharing and communication around international students who are distressed or distressing. There are two primary ways that schools are tackling this issue. The first approach involves bringing in the ISSO director on a case by case basis, when the university’s behavioral intervention team (BIT) or student alert team has a case involving an international student. In these cases, the director may be helpful in gathering information and with direct student outreach.

The second approach involves including the ISSO Director as a permanent member of the BIT. Since our general recommendation is to keep BITs small and action-oriented, this is likely preferable only if there is a sudden upswing in international student cases or consistent need for ISSO support.

This was the case for the University of Utah, where they noticed across the past few years a surge in BIT cases involving international students. Because they were already spending so much time consulting with the ISSO director, they decided to include her as a core member of the BIT.

Two Approaches to Connecting with the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach 1</th>
<th>Approach 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Case Basis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Core Team Member</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ISSO director brought in to consult on a case by case basis</em></td>
<td><em>ISSO director becomes a permanent member of the BIT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pro:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pro:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More strategic allocation of ISSO director’s time</td>
<td>Better team dynamics and more streamlined collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Con:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Con:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May upset team dynamics, make collaboration less fluid</td>
<td>Potential for ISSO director disengagement if relevant case volume is low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Communicating with Families Abroad

The second consideration in developing crisis support policies is around ensuring access to language and translation services. Such services are important in order to communicate clearly with the student and reach out to his or her family, if necessary. EAB research identified three options to consider, ranging from hiring dedicated counseling center staff with language skills to contracting with an outside vendor.

The right answer here is entirely dependent on your institution’s profile: the size of your international student community, the diversity of languages spoken, available community resources, and the frequency of cases.

If you are interested in the vendor route, interpretation fees range from approximately $15 to $60 per 10-minute interval, varying according to the rarity of the language, the least expensive languages being Spanish and Mandarin.

### Ensuring Access to Language and Translation Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire Dedicated Counseling Center Staff with Language Skills</td>
<td>Recruit Campus or Community Speakers</td>
<td>Hire Outside Vendor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefit</strong></td>
<td>Counseling center keeps closer control over case information</td>
<td>Contacts can become long-term partners for other initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Obstacle</strong></td>
<td>Lack of existing staff members or funding to hire</td>
<td>Lack of campus or community resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Fit For...</strong></td>
<td>International student body speaks a limited number of foreign languages</td>
<td>Campus and surrounding community rich in cultural and linguistic resources (e.g., embassies, international NPOs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preparing for the Unexpected

The final issue to proactively address is separation from campus. If a crisis situation requires the student to leave the institution and return home, there are often unexpected complications, such as financial need. To address this, some schools, including Brown University, have created emergency funds that are dedicated to defraying the cost of flying a student home or flying family members here to pick up the student.

However, some students will be unable to travel unsupervised and may not have family that is able to come accompany them home. Without a policy in place to address this situation, institutions have found themselves putting deans of students, counseling center directors, and others on planes on an ad hoc basis to return students of concern back to their home countries. Although extremely rare, these incidents raise the need for institutions to have a policy in place to ensure they’re not left scrambling or down an important staff member in these situations.

Avoiding Roadblocks During a Campus Separation

Prohibitive Costs
Students may be unable to afford the costs associated with treatment or traveling home

Student Supervision
Students may be unable to travel alone and their parents cannot come to get them

Emergency Fund
Establish an emergency fund to help students in need cover the costs of travelling

Who will fund it?
- Donors
- ISSO budget
- Student Affairs discretionary fund

Exit Plan
Create a plan for who on campus could accompany a student home, if it becomes necessary

Who will get on the plane?
- Counseling center staff
- Dean of Students staff
- ISSO staff

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Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Mental Health Services for International Students

Mental health is not a simple or straightforward issue to tackle with any students—let alone international students who often face increased challenges with adjustment and isolation. We hope that the strategies and key questions we have raised around student outreach, tackling stigma, and developing crisis situation policies will help your institution decide how best to serve your students.

EAB Next-Step Recommendations

Quick Wins

Launch outreach initiatives to raise awareness about services

- Collaborate to design co-programming
- Address international student concerns through a dedicated website

Long-Term Strategies

Invest in programs to reduce stigma about counseling

- Launch satellite counseling centers
- Develop crisis response plans for international students

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Study Road Map

1  Essay: Defining Today’s International Student

2  Navigating Successful Campus Transitions
   Lesson #1: Web-Based Pre-Arrival Briefings
   Lesson #2: Campus-Wide Transition Components

3  Revamping Academic Integrity Initiatives
   Lesson #3: First Week Refresher
   Lesson #4: Tiered Educational Sessions
   Lesson #5: Modularized Readiness Assessment
   Lesson #6: Just-in-Time Resources
   Lesson #7: Proactive Peer Network Outreach
   Lesson #8: Mandatory First Violation Meetings

4  Developing Customized Career Resources
   Lesson #9: Dedicated Online Portal
   Lesson #10: Guided Career Fair Walkthroughs
   Lesson #11: Networking Pre-wire Sessions
   Lesson #12: Social Media Intensives
   Lesson #13: Global Job Search Bootcamp
   Lesson #14: Professional Preparation Certificates

5  Recalibrating Mental Health Outreach
   Lesson #15: Awareness Building Strategies
   Lesson #16: Stigma Reduction Tactics
   Lesson #17: Crisis Response Audit

6  Toolkit Resources
   Transition Resources
   Academic Integrity Resources
   Career Development Resources
   Mental Health Resources
Pre-arrival guides do not require intensive resources in order to inform incoming students about necessary information. Even if you cannot invest in a complete overhaul of your pre-arrival support right now, there are smaller steps you can take to maximize the effectiveness of your current guide. Below, we have listed some steps you can take to make your current pre-arrival guide more effective.

**Step 1: Crowdsource questions frequently asked by international students.**

We recommend addressing student-identified concerns in your pre-arrival guide. Prepare a list of questions frequently asked by international students around campus, and then feature your answers to those questions in your guide.

First, identify offices or services that frequently serve international students and list them below. Some suggestions include your international student office, dining hall, residence halls, writing center, career services office, English language support office, and judicial office.

---

Next, ask each office to list the questions they most frequently hear from international students, especially within the first few weeks of the year. You can use the space below to list the offices and common questions.

Office #1: ____________________________________________________________

Common Questions: ___________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Office #2: ____________________________________________________________

Common Questions: __________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
High Return Pre-Arrival Guide (cont.)

Office #3: _____________________________________________________________

Common Questions: ______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Office #4: _____________________________________________________________

Common Questions: ______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Office #5: _____________________________________________________________

Common Questions: ______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Office #6: _____________________________________________________________

Common Questions: ______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Step 2: Sort common questions according to a timeline.

We recommend that you organize your pre-arrival guide topics in a way that will help students prioritize their next steps. To accomplish this, look over the common questions and answers you wrote in Step 1 and arrange them according to a timeline that helps students count down to the date of their arrival. You can use the timeline as a tool to help you rearrange your common questions and answers. You may also find it helpful for choosing topics for your pre-arrival emails or as a table of contents in your pre-arrival brochure.

The blank timeline below shows various stages in the experience of an incoming international student. For each phase, list the relevant student questions. We have also included space in which you can write the critical action steps that students should be taking at that time, such as applying for a visa or purchasing a plane ticket.

Four months before arrival (immediately after acceptance):

Relevant student questions: __________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Critical action steps for students: ______________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

One month before arrival:

Relevant student questions: __________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Critical action steps for students: ______________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
High Return Pre-Arrival Guide (cont.)

Two weeks before arrival:

Relevant student questions: ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Critical action steps for students: _______________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

One day before arrival:

Relevant student questions: ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Critical action steps for students: _______________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Day of arrival:

Relevant student questions: ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Critical action steps for students: _______________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
One week after arrival:

*Relevant student questions:*

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

*Critical action steps for students:*

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
High Return Pre-Arrival Guide (cont.)

Step 3: Choose topics and reminders that respond to common questions.

Use the blank timeline below to plan out the topics you will cover in pre-arrival communications with international students, based on how you sorted student questions in Step 2. For example, at “four months before arrival,” you may want to remind students to purchase their airline tickets to your recommended airport. However, it might be too early to tell students how to get from that airport to campus.

Four months before arrival (immediately after acceptance):

Topics to cover

Reminders to highlight

One month before arrival:

Topics to cover

Reminders to highlight

Two weeks before arrival:

Topics to cover

Reminders to highlight

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
High Return Pre-Arrival Guide (cont.)

You can complete the two stages below just like the ones above. However, you should consider conveying this information through an alternative communication channels, such as emails, physical brochures in the international office, or in-person advising sessions.

Day of arrival:

Topics to cover

Reminders to highlight

One week after arrival:

Primary concerns

Critical action steps

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
High Return Pre-Arrival Guide (cont.)

**Step 4: Consider ways to engage students.**

Administrators can use several strategies for engaging international students with pre-arrival resources and improving their comprehension of key takeaways. Consider deploying one or more of the strategies below to take your pre-arrival guide from good to great.

- **Feature peer voices.** All students value advice from their peers. Try including anecdotes, quotations, and videos of current international students. You could ask the students to explain their tips for success on campus or simply to speak a bit about their background and interests.

- **Choose a format with greater impact.** If time and resources allow, upgrade your pre-arrival guide to a multimedia format. Consider options such as a short video, webinar recording, or synchronous webinar session. Multimedia formats can improve comprehension by activating different learning styles.
Implementing Virtual Conversation Partners

A virtual conversation partner program innovates on the traditional language buddies program by connecting partners through online video call platforms, such as Skype or Google Hangouts. Using this technology, international students can begin building their connection to the college and their English language confidence—all before they even arrive on campus. This low-resource, high-impact strategy could be implemented by any institution. The steps below can help you pass these benefits along to your students by establishing a virtual conversation partner program on your own campus.

Recruit Strong Domestic Participants

The first step to a successful program is to recruit domestic students with the potential to be strong conversation partners. Ideal candidates will demonstrate leadership and cultural sensitivity.

Identify and advertise to segments of domestic students that are likely to be strong candidates. Possible groups to reach out to include cultural-themed student organizations, study abroad returnees, and students majoring in linguistics, foreign languages, international relations, or area studies. On the lines below, list some student groups to reach out to on your own campus.

Provide initial training for accepted domestic participants. This could take the form of a one-day orientation or kickoff event scheduled for late spring or early summer. Topics addressed should include relevant campus resources, common international student challenges, and expectations for the program. Use the spaces below to plan the topics and logistics for your training session.

Topics to cover:

Proposed date: 
Proposed location: 
Implementing Virtual Conversation Partners (cont.)

Set clear expectations for engagement from the outset. We discovered that peer programs often fail due to a lack of distinct expectations for participants. Determine the level of engagement you expect from your partners and list your expectations in the space provided. Be sure to communicate the expectations early and often to both applicants and participants.

On what date should domestic participants reach out to their partners?

How frequently should partners meet virtually?

How many total conversations should partners have before arriving on campus?

How frequently should partners meet after arriving on campus?

Make Smart Matches

The second step to a successful program is to pair conversation partners thoughtfully. Generally, partnerships work best when the two students have something in common, such as gender, country/region of interest, or field of interest. The program coordinator can collect this information by surveying the participants and pairing students accordingly.

What are some characteristics you would like to use for matching student pairs?

Given your office’s resources, how might you be able to discover these characteristics and actually match the students? Ideas include: reviewing student data from admissions documents or emailing a short survey to all participants.
Implementing Virtual Conversation Partners (cont.)

Maintain Engagement

Partnerships can easily fall apart without continued engagement. The program coordinator can play a helpful role in coordinating students and sustaining their excitement in the program using the strategies outlined below.

- Respond promptly to questions and emails from the participants. Not only does this create a high-touch image, but also ensures that students move through their obstacles and continue participating. Often, student questions are as simple as re-requesting contact information for their partner, but this simple question could bring a partnership screeching to a halt.

Consider your office’s staff structure and resources. Who could have the capacity to respond promptly to student questions? For example, a student worker in your office could handle routine questions independently and escalate more difficult issues to your attention.

- Develop a resource and FAQ database. Include answers to common participant questions, from both the international and domestic student perspective. Also, include directions to frequently used resources, such as links to helpful websites or recommendations for an office on campus to contact. This resource hub could be housed on a simple page on your office’s website.

- Plan some modest activities for post-arrival interaction. These could range widely in resources and complexity, based on your institution’s situation. Brainstorm some ideas for activities on the spaces below. Some suggestions include field trips to local landmarks, social events, holiday celebrations, or group service projects.
Basic Needs Worksheet

An Initial Guide to Campus and Community Resources

There is lots of information that you need to communicate to your new international students upon their arrival. However, students will be unable to focus their attention on topics such as academic integrity and joining student organizations until their basic needs are met. With that in mind, we recommend providing a guide to local campus and community resources for your international students.

Use the template on the next page as a guide in developing a resource list for your students. We have provided examples of potential ideas, but encourage you to consider your campus location and population and put together a list that will be most useful to your students. Go a step further in supporting your students by including transportation and cost information to provide guidance and set expectations.
We know that your first few weeks on campus and in (the United States or Canada) can be overwhelming. There is so much to be done when you arrive, as you balance getting settled, starting classes, and beginning to acculturate to life at (your institution’s name).

To help you with this initial transition, we have put together a list of things you will likely want to get done over the next few days or weeks, and the most convenient place to do so.

Campus and Community Resources
Where to Get the Essentials in (your city or town).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Getting a Cell Phone</th>
<th>Opening a Bank Account</th>
<th>Buying Toiletries &amp; Other Essentials</th>
<th>Finding Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Options</strong></td>
<td>Sprint kiosk in the student center until 9/15</td>
<td>Student Federal Credit Union</td>
<td>School bookstore</td>
<td>Dining Hall #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dining Hall #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student center food court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Options</strong></td>
<td>Verizon store</td>
<td>Bank of America (locations <a href="#">here</a>)</td>
<td>Bed, Bath, &amp; Beyond</td>
<td>Local grocery store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best Buy</td>
<td>Capital One Bank (locations <a href="#">here</a>)</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Nearby restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(links to websites)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Walmart</td>
<td>See also: Food Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td>Bus routes available <a href="#">here</a></td>
<td>Bus routes available <a href="#">here</a></td>
<td>Bus routes available <a href="#">here</a></td>
<td>Bus routes available <a href="#">here</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus shuttle schedule <a href="#">here</a></td>
<td>Campus shuttle schedule <a href="#">here</a></td>
<td>Taxi service available at 202-555-2110</td>
<td>Campus shuttle schedule <a href="#">here</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated Cost</strong></td>
<td>Prepaid plans start at $...</td>
<td>You should NOT be charged a fee for opening an account</td>
<td>Sheets range from $ to $</td>
<td>Sandwich: $6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly plans start at $...</td>
<td>Monthly account fees may range from $ to $</td>
<td>You can find shampoo for $</td>
<td>Chinese takeout: $15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phones range from $ to $</td>
<td>Alarm clocks on average cost $</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restaurant meal: $12-$25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guide to Campus Resources

A One-Stop Shop for Student Questions

International students tend to have a lot of the same questions and need many of the same campus resources. However, there is often not a centralized place where they can go to identify and locate campus resources. Consider developing a FAQ list, based on the questions you hear most often, to help direct your international students to the many resources available on your campus.

Use the template on the next page to help you develop a campus resources guide for your students. We have provided examples of potential questions and corresponding resources, but we encourage you to consider what questions you hear most often on your campus, and the most appropriate resources you have to address them.
Guide to Campus Resources (cont.)

As the semester progresses, you may face unforeseen challenges, or have questions regarding your academic, social, or emotional transition. This is normal. As a new student, particularly one studying outside of your home country, your transition is an ongoing process, and you will find that many of your peers are facing the same challenges and asking the same questions.

Please consider taking advantage of the many resources and supports we have available to you on campus. Have you found yourself facing one of the issues below?

I’m not feeling well. Where can I go to get help?

The Student Health Center can see you the same day you call to make an appointment, and there is no cost to you. They are located…

I didn’t get into the classes I need for my major. What are my options?

Your academic advisor can help you make a plan for meeting your degree requirements. If you don’t know who yours is, contact…

I’m having trouble with my schoolwork. My teachers talk too fast and I can’t keep up!

Many students feel this way at first! The English Language Center has resources to help you as you transition and as you continue to improve your language skills throughout the year. They are located…

I have to write my first research paper and I don’t know where to start.

The library has many resources to help you as you familiarize yourself with the research and writing process at our institution. Find general research guidelines on their website, http://www.thelibrary.edu, or go meet with a librarian in person for more personalized guidance.
My professor told me I don’t cite correctly but didn’t tell me how or what to do differently. How can I find this out?

Our website, www.url.edu, explains the correct way to cite in academic papers in North America. Please visit the website and review the resources there. If you would like personalized help, a librarian or someone in the Writing Center will be happy to help. The center is located…

My professor accused me of a plagiarism violation, but I didn’t realize I had done anything wrong. Can someone explain this to me?

An academic integrity officer can explain your teacher’s accusation and help you to avoid similar situations in the future. You can meet with an officer in…

I feel really alone here. I’m worried about doing well in school, making my parents happy, and making new friends. Who can I talk to?

The Student Health and Wellness Center has counselors on staff who are here to help people feeling exactly the way that you are. Their services are free and confidential—no one will ever find out that you visited their office. They can help you talk through what you are feeling and think of some solutions. Please call them at 202-555-1234 to make an appointment, or stop by anytime if it is urgent that you speak to someone. They are located…

I would like to get involved in something on campus to meet new people and find some other students with interests similar to mine. Where can I go?

The Student Activities Organization can help you learn about all of the different opportunities for involvement on campus, and find one that would be a good match for you. They are open Mondays through Fridays from 9:30am to 4pm. You can find them at…
First Semester Satisfaction Survey

Your students can be a tremendous informational resource for you in determining how to design and deliver your orientation programming. We recommend distributing a survey, like the one below, to international students one month into the semester to assess the effectiveness of your orientation programming and uncover gaps in content and delivery.

Questionnaire for First Semester International Students

1. Do you think the timing and length of orientation were appropriate? Why or why not?

2. What were the most helpful elements of orientation for you?

3. What were the least helpful elements of orientation for you?

4. What was missing from orientation that you think would benefit students in the future?

5. What were the biggest challenges you faced on your arrival to campus?
First Semester Satisfaction Survey (cont.)

6. What campus resources or units have you used or visited for help since arriving on campus?


7. Where would you go for help now if you faced a problem you didn’t know how to solve?


8. What questions or problems do you still have as the semester progresses?


9. Do you have any other comments about how we could improve your orientation experience?


Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Developing a Transition Refresher Session

We recognize that even with extensive pre-arrival support and a well-developed orientation program, international students have a continued need for support throughout their first semester at your institution.

To address this, the University of Minnesota developed a follow-up session to reinforce the information provided at orientation and address any concerns or questions halfway through the semester. They combine the session with a resource fair attended by a variety of campus services. The fair allows students to address some of the issues that arise in the session immediately, as well as familiarize themselves with these resources, making it easier to approach these units and their staff in the future.

The attached document—which is distributed to the session’s student leaders—outlines an agenda and details the components of Minnesota’s program. The session includes a self-assessment, a small group exercise, peer testimonials, a large group debrief, and an introduction to the resource fair.

See the University of Minnesota’s Table Leader Guide in our online toolkit, available at: http://www.eab.com/Research-and-Insights/Student-Affairs-Forum/Toolkits/2014/International-Student-Toolkit/Transition-Tools

One of the highlights of the program is that student attendees are required to visit three different campus units at the resource fair and obtain signatures from their respective representatives. Recognizing that approaching university staff can be intimidating to international students, the form distributed to them contains sample questions to ask, as well as a list of units in attendance.


If you would like to consider implementing a similar program at your institution, we recommend following the steps on the following pages to make it as effective as possible in addressing international student concerns.
Developing a Transition Refresher Session (cont.)

Step 1: Identify an Optimal Time and Location

The University of Minnesota piloted their orientation refresher in mid-October, which we agree is ideal. This is the time when students are beginning to deal with midterm exams and papers, and have been dealing with various other social and emotional adjustment issues for several months.

Consider when would be feasible for your staff to pull this event together and when other campus units would be available to participate. Consider also how many sessions to hold, keeping in mind that you will need a staff person to lead each small group conversation, and that groups will ideally be no larger than 8 to 10 students.

Ideal number of sessions: ____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Available times: ______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Consider also where on campus you could hold an event of this size, preferably with an adjoining room for the resource fair:

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Step 2: Determine How You Will Draw Attendees

To make this program as impactful as possible and reach those students who need it most, consider mandating attendance. If that is unfeasible on your campus, other strategies to induce attendance include:

- Incorporating it into an existing campus event that garners high attendance
- Branding it as a student or academic success event
- Marketing it extensively through the ISSO, word of mouth, and established peer networks
Step 3: Identify and Recruit Table Leaders

One of the keys to the success of a program like this is using international upperclass students as table leaders. Incoming students feel that they can relate more closely to their peers, and the upperclass students can share personal experiences that resonate strongly with new students. Possible participants include:

- Peer mentors
- ISSO student employees
- Student organization leaders
- Orientation leaders
- Past participants
- Other active international students

Below, list possible student volunteers and the reasons they would be qualified to participate:

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________
Qualifications: ___________________________________________________________________
Step 4: Reach Out to Campus Units to Obtain Buy-In

To maximize the success of the program, reach out to campus units that tend to have a high volume of interactions with international students and encourage them to participate. Taking part in the program will give these units an opportunity to get in front of international students to explain their services, build relationships, and ease some of the barriers to access students often face. Valuable campus units include:

- Student health and counseling services
- English language support services
- University libraries
- Writing center
- Career services

Consider what units international students most need access to on your campus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Importance to International Students</th>
<th>Possible Challenges in Getting Buy-In</th>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Step 5: Evaluate and Improve

Ultimately, this session should help identify and address international student concerns and familiarize them with the resources available at your institution. Students can provide valuable feedback on how well you are accomplishing this goal. It is important to have students complete an evaluation at the end of the program to assess what they liked and didn’t like about it, as well as how effective it was in addressing their concerns.

Consider the specific outcomes you want to achieve for your students through this session and design a short survey for students to complete assessing what they learned as well as what they felt was most and least effective about the program. Incorporate this feedback into the ongoing development of the program. Some components to consider assessing are:

- Timing of the sessions
- Effectiveness of table leaders
- Comfort level sharing challenges in small groups
- Increase in familiarity with campus resources
Optimizing Your Peer Mentor Program

Peer mentoring programs can be an excellent way to provide personalized, high-touch support to international students at a relatively low cost to the institution. Furthermore, international students are often more comfortable asking questions and expressing confusion and difficulty to their peers, whom they view as less intimidating and better able to relate to them.

Many institutions already have peer mentoring programs in place. Whether you are developing a new program or evaluating your current one, we recommend carefully reviewing the following steps to ensure you are providing the best and most comprehensive service possible to your students.

Step 1: Develop a Timeline and Schedule of Communication

It is important to dedicate time and resources to developing a peer mentoring program that supports incoming international students throughout their transition to campus and provides meaningful academic and social support during this period. To do so, first establish the communication commitment you will expect from mentors:

- **End of prior school year**: Mentors receive comprehensive training on the resources available on campus, working with international students, and common challenges and questions to anticipate.
- **Four weeks prior**: Mentors reach out to their mentees via email to introduce themselves, provide some basic transition information, and offer to answer any questions the incoming student has.
- **Two weeks prior**: Mentors reach out again with arrival information and answer any last-minute questions.
- **At orientation**: Mentors check in with mentees at least twice to ensure that they are engaging in orientation programming and not facing any initial challenges.
- **Throughout the first semester**: Mentors check in with mentees on a weekly or biweekly basis, offering support in their academic and social transition. Mentors meet face to face with mentees at least once a month to evaluate their transition and help solve problems.
- **Throughout first year**: Mentors reach out to mentees on a regular basis suggesting and organizing social activities for them to participate in together.

Step 2: Provide Training and Incentives for Mentors

If properly trained and supported, peer mentors not only provide important support for incoming international students, but also lighten the burden on your office and staff. Their training should include:

- A job description and clearly outlined expectations
- A comprehensive overview of services available on campus
- Intercultural sensitivity training
- Training on academic coaching
Optimizing Your Peer Mentor Program (cont.)

- How to provide targeted support (e.g. exam preparation, study skills)
- How to identify at-risk and struggling students

It is important to provide incentives for participating mentors so that they see the value of participating in the program and feel motivated to take their responsibilities seriously. Based on your institution’s resources, consider paying mentors, providing a supplement to their cocurricular transcript, or providing professional development opportunities throughout the year.

Step 3: Establish an Accountability Mechanism

Once mentors are trained and incentivized, you will still want to put a system in place to monitor their interactions. Accountability mechanisms ensure the program’s expectations are met and alert you to areas where you may have to intervene. These mechanisms should include:

- **Regular check-ins**: Ensure that mentors understand their responsibility to check in with their mentees at least twice per month. Check-in channel may vary, but the mentor should establish goals for each call or meeting, and has specific questions for determining how to evaluate mentees.

- **Feedback form**: Mentor completes a feedback form after each student meeting or check-in, listing challenges discussed, solutions proposed, any ongoing issues the mentor foresees, and areas for ongoing support. Senior or veteran mentors review all forms on a regular basis to check the quality of interactions and identify students who may need more support.

  See *[EAB’s Peer Mentor Check-in Form]*

- **Staff oversight**: Staff review forms escalated to them by senior peer mentors. They help evaluate those students most at risk and provide follow-up support when necessary.

- **Program improvements**: Staff use the feedback forms to evaluate and inform their programming, making changes based on knowledge gaps and challenges they see recurring.

Step 4: Develop a FAQ Database for Mentors

Use feedback collected consistently through this process to develop a FAQ database for peer mentors to use. Include questions and support needs that arise repeatedly, tried-and-true solutions, and lists of campus resources that may be of use. Consider breaking down the FAQ database either by timing (pre-arrival vs. post-arrival questions), type of support (academic vs. social), or another way based on the type and frequency of questions at your institution.
Pre-Arrival Portal Launch Guide

Pre-arrival portals for academic integrity offer many benefits for improving international student learning. They allow international students to learn in a safe and familiar environment, alert them to new academic norms early, and provide opportunities for self-paced learning. Pre-arrival portals also allow you to maximize face time during orientation by creating a more interactive workshop.

Step 1: Decide on a Portal Platform

Determine whether you would like to build a portal in-house or coordinate with a vendor to build one for you. Below, we have listed some key considerations for each option to help you decide:

Option 1: Build a Portal In-House

- Do you have a staff member with web design experience in your office?
- Does your campus have a web team that you could consult with?
- Here are some examples of publicly available academic integrity portals.
  - Academic Honesty Self-Test, developed collaboratively by Colby College, Bates College, and Bowdoin College: [http://abacus.bates.edu/cbb/quiz/](http://abacus.bates.edu/cbb/quiz/)
  - York University’s Academic Integrity Tutorial: [http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html](http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html)
  - University of Southern California’s Academic Integrity Tutorial: [http://www.usc.edu/libraries/about/reference/tutorials/academic_integrity/](http://www.usc.edu/libraries/about/reference/tutorials/academic_integrity/)

Option 2: Contract with a Vendor

- Does your office have funding available to hire a vendor or could you request some?
- Does sophisticated, high-caliber design rank highly in your list of portal priorities?
- Does your campus lack a web team with whom you could coordinate to create the portal?
Step 2: Develop Curriculum for the Portal

We recommend that the portal cover much of the basic information normally presented during your orientation session on academic integrity for international students. This way, you will be able to leverage your valuable face-to-face orientation session to review and reinforce the information through engaging activities, such as games or role-play exercises. Possible topics include:

- The definition academic integrity
- Examples of violations that are common on your campus
- Some guidelines or rules for academic work
- Student statements of responsibility
- The institutional policy on plagiarism

List topics that you would like to include in your pre-arrival portal below.
Pre-Arrival Portal Launch Guide (cont.)

Step 3: Choose a Format that Uses Interactive and Multimedia Elements

We discovered that pre-arrival portals will be most effective if they accommodate nonnative English speakers and incorporate a knowledge test. Possible formats include a video, slide show with voiceover, click-through web pages, or even a combination of these. Discuss the possibilities for your project with your web design team or vendor. We’ve listed some suggestions below, but you can also use this tool as a template for adding other new features based on you or your colleagues’ experiences working with international students.

- Accommodate nonnative English speakers:
  - Videos should feature pause and rewind functions
    - Already developed? ________________
    - If not, which staff members would create it? __________________________
  - Text should be limited and avoid overly complex language
    - Already developed?
    - If not, which staff members would create it? __________________________

- Incorporate a knowledge check:
  - Insert a short quiz after each section
    - Already developed?
    - If not, which staff members would create it? __________________________
  - AND/OR require a longer test at the end of the portal
    - Already developed?
    - If not, which staff members would create it? __________________________
  - AND/OR ask students to write a reflection essay
    - Already developed?
    - If not, which staff members would create it? __________________________

Note: Policy documents are intended to serve as illustrations and should not be used without first consulting with general counsel. The Advisory Board Company and contact institutions assume no liability for their use.
Step 4: Redesign Face-to-Face Orientation

With basic information out of the way, you have more freedom to design a creative, engaging orientation session after your students arrive. Sessions should last for 30 to 90 minutes and include interactive components. Below, we have listed suggestions for activities and some relevant considerations.

**Small group discussions** help new students build support networks and internalize social norms against cheating. Based on your curriculum, list some discussion questions below.

Discussion questions:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

**Role play exercises** provide an opportunity for students to grapple with real-life situations where they may face a conflict of values and tough ethical choices. You can use peer mentors or students in the audience as actors. These exercises are most effective when drawn from real anecdotes you have encountered in your work. Think about your experience with academic integrity cases and list the examples you’d like to use below.

Role-play exercise scenarios:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

**Friendly competitions** can help engage students who might not otherwise participate. The competition could take many forms, such as a quiz bowl, a game-show-style contest, team trivia, scavenger hunt, and more. Be creative! Students might compete alone or in teams, and you might distribute one large prize or several small prizes. Prizes vary by institution, but they can be as simple as a school sweatshirt or as elaborate as an iPod. Consider your competition style and prize in the spaces below.

Competition style:

__________________________________________

Prize ideas:

__________________________________________

**Peer testimonials** can be a powerful tool for creating a social norm against cheating and explaining difficult concepts to students. All students, including international students, view their older peers as role models and value their opinions. Consider inviting a successful current international student to speak about his or her experiences in a new country with new academic norms.

Current students who might be interested in speaking:

__________________________________________

Note: Policy documents are intended to serve as illustrations and should not be used without first consulting with general counsel. The Advisory Board Company and contact institutions assume no liability for their use.
Step 5: Establish Accountability Mechanisms

We recommend that you require all incoming international students to review and complete the resources within the portal. Below, we have listed some possibilities for ensuring compliance before students arrive on campus. Choose the option that best suits your institution, or discuss other options with your web design team or vendor.

- Host the portal on course management software that allows you to track each students’ progress
- Include a certificate of completion page for students to print and bring along with them
- Require students to sign in to the portal using their student ID number
Academic Integrity Quick Reference Template

Instructions

We recommend creating a quick reference guide to hand out to students during events or in your office. Quick reference guides offer immediate assistance to students at times when on-campus resources are closed. The guide will be most helpful if it briefly answers some of the most common questions and directs students to more in-depth resources online and on campus. On the next page, you will find a template for creating this guide. You will find our instructions in ALL CAPS. Simply erase these instructions after following them, and your guide will be ready to print!
This guide will help you follow the rules of academic integrity. Keep it at your desk and use it when you write complete your essays and other assignments. This guide will answer some of the most common questions and explain where to find more help for citations and academic integrity online and on campus.

Where Can I Go for Help Online?

The library’s website [INSTITUTION LIBRARY]: INSERT LINK HERE
The website for OWL at Purdue: INSERT LINK HERE
The Purdue OWL web hub for English as a Second Language students: INSERT LINK HERE

[INSERT OTHER WEBSITES YOU RECOMMEND TO STUDENTS]

Where Can I Go for Help on Campus?

If you need help citing your sources, go to:

[RESOURCES MAY INCLUDE A WRITING CENTER OR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICE]

If you don’t know where to start with research:

[RESOURCES MAY INCLUDE THE LIBRARY OR THE ACADEMIC ADVISING OFFICE]

If you’re feeling overwhelmed by your classwork:

[RESOURCES MAY INCLUDE THE ACADEMIC ADVISING OFFICE OR THE COUNSELING CENTER]
How Can I Avoid Common Mistakes?

The most common types of violations at [INSTITUTION] are [VIOLATION TYPE #1] and [VIOLATION TYPE #2].

[VIOLATION TYPE #1] means [DEFINITION IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE]. Here are some steps you can take to avoid this mistake:

- [TIP #1]
- [TIP #2]

[VIOLATION TYPE #2] means [DEFINITION IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE]. Here are some steps you can take to avoid this mistake:

- [TIP #1]
- [TIP #2]

(ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE BELOW)

*Inappropriate collaboration means working with classmates on a project that you were told to complete alone. Here are some steps you can take to avoid this mistake:*

- *Ask your professor if you aren’t sure whether you can work with your classmates.*
- *Never share answers or essay material unless the professor says it’s OK.*
Tiered Academic Integrity Sessions

Tiered sessions can help international students better understand our academic integrity requirements because the sessions tie the complexity of their material to international students’ gradual adjustment to our language and culture. Tiered sessions can actually be rather simple to implement within the context of an existing program or academic course. Alternately, you could redesign existing workshops on academic integrity to follow the tiered session model. You can implement tiered sessions on your own campus by following the steps below.

**Step 1: Choose a Home for the Sessions**

Tiered academic integrity sessions are easiest to implement when you integrate them into existing institutional activities. Consider housing them within existing programs, academic courses, or workshops that could host two or three academic integrity sessions. Possibilities include a bridge program, first-year seminar for international students, English as a Second Language course, workshop series, university introduction course, coffee hour groups, or international student club meetings.

Which programs or activities at your institution might be able to host the sessions?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

**Step 2: Develop a Timeline for the Sessions**

Identify the best timeline for your campus. We recommend that Session I occur shortly after the international students arrive, Session II occur about two to four weeks after arrival, and Session III occur about four to six weeks after arrival. The precise dates will depend upon your institutional calendar and the “home” you chose above.

List tentative dates for each session below.

Session I: ________________________________________________________________

Session II: ________________________________________________________________

Session III: ________________________________________________________________

Source: Adapted from materials shared by the University of Oklahoma.
Tiered Academic Integrity Sessions (cont.)

Step 3: Divide Material According to Session Timing and Content Depth

The effectiveness of tiered sessions relies upon aligning the complexity of the material you present with international students’ acculturation.

The first session should last for about 10 to 15 minutes and cover only basic content. Some good examples of topics include a welcome from staff or an introduction to the general concept of academic integrity. What content and activities will you feature in your first session?

Length: __________________________________________

Content: __________________________________________

Activities/Format: __________________________________________

The second session should last for about 60 minutes. This session includes some of the more complex information, such as common violation examples and advice for tough situations. We recommend maximizing international student learning through an interactive format, such as role-play exercises. What content and activities will you feature in your second session?

Length: __________________________________________

Content: __________________________________________

Activities/Format: __________________________________________

The third session should last for about 45 minutes. This session can include the most sophisticated information, such as the adjudication process or your institution’s official policy on academic dishonesty. What content and activities will you feature in your final session?

Length: __________________________________________

Content: __________________________________________

Activities/Format: __________________________________________

Source: Adapted from materials shared by the University of Oklahoma.
EAB Advice

We strongly encourage institutions to develop a dedicated career development website for international students. Given their unique needs and their reliance on websites for information, international students need to be able to find relevant information online quickly and easily. Our research identified several key features of excellent dedicated websites for international students:

- Website is easy to find and navigate to from the ISSO homepage
- All services and resources provided by the career center are clearly outlined, along with a schedule of events
- Information is clear, concise, and streamlined, emphasizing to international students the most important elements of the job search
- Emphasis on what students can do first to get started (often a large hurdle for overwhelmed students to overcome)
- Peer or alumni testimonials provide examples of and advice from students who have gone before them and succeeded in securing a job
- Contact information is provided for relevant career staff

Notable Websites

- Northeastern University
  Northeastern does an excellent job of providing guidance and resources to international students in a clear and intuitive way  
  http://www.northeastern.edu/careerservices/services/international/

- University of Birmingham
  Birmingham makes valuable use of alumni testimonials to provide guidance, and well as encouragement, to current students undertaking a job search
  https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/international/index.aspx
International Student Career Website Audit

Determine How Well Your Website Is Serving International Students

If your institution has developed a dedicated career website for international students, use the following questions to assess how comprehensively your site serves their career development and job search needs. For each “No” response, consider what resources and staff time it would require to add these additional features.

1. Does your dedicated website outline all the services you have available?
   
   Yes ____  No____

2. Does your dedicated website provide staff contact information?
   
   Yes ____  No____

3. Is your dedicated website easy to access from your institution’s homepage or the ISSO homepage?
   
   Yes ____  No____

4. Does your dedicated website provide usable information for international students on the mechanics of the job search and visa requirements?
   
   Yes ____  No____

5. Does your dedicated website provide links to useful external sites, such as www.myvisajobs.com or www.goingglobal.com, which can help international students find international hiring-friendly employers?
   
   Yes ____  No____

6. Does your dedicated website provide information on the intricacies of resume-writing, interviewing, networking, and cultural workplace norms in the United States and/or Canada?
   
   Yes ____  No____

7. Does your dedicated website provide international alumni peer testimonials?
   
   Yes ____  No____

Enhancements to consider based on “No” responses:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Guide to External Resources

There are many digital resources that can supplement your office’s efforts to support international students in their job search and take some of the burden off of your staff in providing this information. The websites below clarify visa regulations, identify international-friendly employers, provide concrete tips on the mechanics of the job search, and host listings of available jobs. Many of these sites require a subscription—commonly by the institution on behalf of its students—but they are generally not cost-prohibitive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Useful External Websites for International Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.MyVisajobs.com">www.MyVisajobs.com</a></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.GoinGlobal.com">www.GoinGlobal.com</a></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.H1visajobs.com">www.H1visajobs.com</a></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.iStudentCity.com">www.iStudentCity.com</a></strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Career Fair Preparation Guide

Compared to their domestic counterparts, international students face enormous barriers in the job search. In addition to visa regulation and documentation requirements, they face cultural challenges that are often more nuanced and require additional support. One resource that international students tend to need extra preparation to take advantage of is career fairs.

Our work surfaced some high-impact support services that career centers can use to prepare international students for career fairs.

**Identifying Friendly Employers**

We strongly recommend researching which employers attending the career fair are open to hiring international students, using either direct employer outreach or perhaps past hiring as a guide. This information will be useful in preparing international students for the fair, and optimizing their time spent there.

- **Option #1: Create a map of international-friendly companies attending the career fair**

  Consider providing your international students with a map of the layout of the career fair, highlighting employers open to hiring them. This will help them make efficient use of their time at the fair and increase their confidence in approaching potential employers.

- **Option #2: Create a list of employers who have hired your international students in the past**

  This option may not uncover every high-potential employer at the fair, but it will help international students beyond their experience at the career fair. Creating a list of past employers will provide your current students with actionable leads and a sense of the opportunities available to them.

  Penn State provides this type of list to its students and posts it on their website for easy access: [http://global.psu.edu/info/internationals-psu/students/employment/f-1-curricular-practical-training-cpt/employers-who-have](http://global.psu.edu/info/internationals-psu/students/employment/f-1-curricular-practical-training-cpt/employers-who-have)

- **Option #3: Develop workshop lessons on finding employers and applying for jobs**

  Consider integrating materials on how to identify high-potential employers into a workshop for international students, whether or not it’s specifically dedicated to career fair preparation. Provide students with strategies and guidelines on how to determine the hiring practices of U.S. or Canadian companies, and instruct them on the benefits of having done this type of research before attending a career fair.
Dedicated Career Fair Prep Sessions

Key Content

- How to research employers and apply to jobs
- Behavioral expectations and professional cultural norms
- Conversation starters and role-play exercises

EAB Advice

Help students identify priority companies and walk through researching them
Our research found that employers grow tired of being approached by hordes of students “throwing their resumes at them.” By walking students through the process of researching employers ahead of time (ideally incorporating a computer into the prep session, if possible) and even applying to a few jobs, you can change the entire conversation that students have with prospective employers. Not only will this process help students identify the most promising employers to approach, but allow them to speak knowledgeably about the company itself and possible job opportunities.

Explicitly state behavioral expectations for the career fair, particularly those based on cultural norms
International students tend to make many of the same mistakes in their interactions with prospective employers, often due to differences in professional and social interactions between the United States or Canada and their home country. The most effective way to address these differences is by laying out the standards by which students will be judged by prospective employers. You should be sure to emphasize the norms they will be expected to follow in a U.S. professional environment. These standards include:

- Having a firm handshake
- Maintaining eye contact throughout professional interactions
- Maintaining a certain distance from conversation partners
- Dressing professionally, as defined by U.S. employers (be explicit here!)
- Being comfortable speaking to recruiters about their strengths and “selling themselves” as a great fit for potential employers
- Highlighting not just academic strengths, but also personal and extra-curricular accomplishments

Allow international students to practice these new skills and expectations in a safe environment
The standards outlined above often represent radically different norms for professional and personal interaction for international students, and the prep session should build in time to allow students to practice these new behaviors and build their confidence for the career fair. By allowing students to network with each other and practice starting and interrupting conversations, they will be much more competent and comfortable when it comes time to exhibit these behaviors in a higher-stakes environment.
Career Fair Preparation Guide (cont.)

Career Fair Tours

To reinforce the lessons taught at the prep session and ease students’ nerves on the day of the fair, organize a pre-fair tour for international students. This tour will give them a chance to see the setup before the fair opens, meet a few employers to break the ice, and review the materials from the prep session they attended a few days earlier.

Logistics to consider:

How long will the tour take?
Consider allowing about 30 minutes to show students around, introduce them to select employers, and review some of the most important information from the prep session.

Who will guide the tour on the day of the fair?
Most institutions will need just one person to guide the tour. Interviewees indicate that most career staff members can easily manage the content and direction of the tour, making for an easy lift on employees.

What content will you highlight during the tour?
Consider what the most important issues you addressed during the prep session were, as well as any frequently recurring questions or concerns you observe among your international student population. Dedicate a portion of the tour to reinforcing that information and answering students’ questions.

Will attending employers be open to interacting with students before the official opening of the fair?
Be sure to notify employers at the fair that you plan to approach in advance so they are not caught off guard or turned off by the international students. Our research showed that employers tend to respond positively to this initiative, but they do prefer to be notified in advance.
Networking Preparation Guide

Many of the barriers that international students must overcome when preparing for career fairs also affect their ability to take full advantage of networking events. In addition to adapting to new professional norms and the overwhelming character of networking events, international students must grow comfortable with the North American expectation that they will “sell themselves” to potential employers. This is a very uncomfortable reality for many international students. However, it is a truly critical skill for a job search in North America.

Consider how you can support your international students in preparing for and practicing networking while they are on campus.

**Developing Workshops for Networking Prep**

While all students likely find networking a daunting prospect, recognize that international students face several unique barriers. In creating content for a networking workshop, consider the following:

- Provide details on what the event will look like to demystify an often overwhelming situation for international students.
- Set expectations for the event, and have students set individual objectives (e.g., speak with a certain number of employers)
- Outline the behavioral and cultural expectations for the event, providing explicit instruction on how to dress, how to address attendees, what topics of conversation to stick to, and how to join existing conversations
- Allow students time to practice their newly learned skills with each other

**Developing a Networking Event for International Students**

Depending on the location of your institution, there may be networking events taking place on campus or in your surrounding community that international students can attend to practice their skills. We advise institutions to compile a list of these events and direct international students to them. You may want to consider bringing students to the events as a group if there is enough interest and you have the staff capacity.

We recommend developing an international student-only networking event on campus, whether or not there are networking opportunities in your community. This will give international students a safe and exclusive environment to practice networking while simultaneously building their network.
Networking Preparation Guide (cont.)

Use the questions below to guide your development of an on-campus networking event for international students:

What employers in your network would be willing to attend a networking event for international students?

_________________________________________________________________________

Where on campus will you hold the event? Is there a free space that you could employ for this purpose?

_________________________________________________________________________

How many students and employers will you invite to participate in the event? Will you be able to recruit employers from various industries to attend?

_________________________________________________________________________

How will you decide which students to include in the event?

_________________________________________________________________________

Will you hold a preparation session dedicated to this event? When and where will you hold it?

_________________________________________________________________________

What will the format of the event be? Speed-networking? Informal conversation?

_________________________________________________________________________

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Networking Preparation Guide (cont.)

Will you have food at the event? Who will fund it?

How will you evaluate whether the event was successful?
Networking Quick Reference Sheet

Though your website may provide a plethora of information, and your students may attend many of the workshops and other opportunities you have available to them, they may still struggle to remember the key guidelines and points that will help them to be successful networkers. They may, in fact, be overwhelmed by all of the information. Distribute the quick reference guide on the following page as a brief reminder of the most important hints, so that students can take it with them as a final reminder for last minute review.
Helpful Hints for Interacting with Networking Contacts

Networking events and career fairs provide valuable opportunities to learn more about the industry you’re interested in, interact with potential future employers, learn about job opportunities, and practice your professional communication skills.

During these interactions, it is important to keep a few key guidelines in mind, in order to make the best possible impression with important networking contacts:

- Be sure to dress appropriately, which generally means a suit for both men and women in a neutral color, such as black, navy blue, or gray.
- When introducing yourself, use a firm handshake, and maintain eye contact.
- Leave a few feet of space between yourself and the person you are speaking with.
- Don’t be afraid to speak about your accomplishments! Employers will expect you to highlight your strengths and experiences.
- Be prepared! Research the companies in attendance beforehand and identify which ones are open to hiring international students.

Suggested Conversation Starters for Networking Events

We understand that it can be intimidating to approach potential employers at networking events. Try to keep in mind that they are here to meet you, and are excited at the prospect of discovering new talent! They are expecting to talk about themselves and their career paths, so don’t be hesitant to ask questions!

- What experience did you have to get your job?
- What are your primary job responsibilities?
- What do you wish you had known about your position/the field before you started?
- What professional and personal skills does it take to succeed at this type of work?
- What recommendations do you have for me regarding the job search strategy?
- What other people do you recommend that I talk with? May I tell them that you referred me to them?

Maximizing Your Preparation for Networking Opportunities

Before attending a networking event, take some time to set personal goals for the experience, such as approaching a certain number of people, speaking with representatives from a company you’re particularly interested in, or identifying promising job opportunities in your field.

Goal #1: ____________________________________________________________

Goal #2: ____________________________________________________________
Guide to Building a Certificate Program

Many international students do not take advantage of the full suite of career development support resources on campus. You must compete with academic and social concerns that often monopolize international students’ mindshare. By providing an incentive that international students value, such as a certificate, you can encourage students to participate in career development more comprehensively.

Identify Existing Programs

Certificate programs bundle existing programs within a division. They allow Student Affairs leaders to better serve students without expending significant additional resources. Popular choices include job search and professional development workshops, resume reviews, mock interviews, and networking opportunities. Consider what offerings on your campus you may be able to bundle and market to international students.

Determine Program Logistics

It is possible to develop and administer a certificate program at relatively minimal cost. However, it is important to think through the logistics of the program to ensure that it is run as efficiently as possible and that it is sustainable in the long-term. Consider the following:

How will you track the progress of student participation in the program? (Tip: Consider assigning a student worker to transfer data from attendance sheets into a CRM database.)
What time frame will students have to complete the program? (Tip: One- and two-semester programs balance comprehensiveness with efficiency.)

Will you have make-up opportunities for students who miss certain components of the program? (Tip: A limited number of make-up opportunities boosts completion, though accommodating absences too often may promote delinquency.)

What form will the certificate take and how will it be presented to students? (Tip: Consider distributing paper certificates at a closing ceremony or emailing virtual certificates with recommended resume language.)

**Develop a Marketing Strategy**

Our research showed that the most effective way to reach international students is through communications from the ISSO. International students are familiar with the ISSO and are accustomed to receiving information from them. We recommend emphasizing the opportunity to earn the certificate when advertising all departmental programs in ISSO communications.

You may also want to consider other channels that have been successful at reaching your international students in the past. Don’t overlook the effectiveness of reaching out through informal networks to campus departments and units that interact frequently with international students.
Guide to Building a Certificate Program (cont.)

Finalize Program Offerings

After considering the variety of offerings on your campus, you must decide what will ultimately be included in the program and communicate that to students. Consider not only what will provide the best career and professional development to students, but also what will be feasible in terms of scheduling and logistics.

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<tr>
<th>Program Component</th>
<th>When Offered</th>
<th>Where Offered</th>
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Student Self-Progress Tracker

To help students track their progress toward the certificate and increase the likelihood that they will complete all components of the program, provide them with a form that reminds them of the requirements and helps them keep track of what they have left to complete. Use the template on the next page as a guide in developing your form, but consider what information you want to collect and what requirements you have put in place in customizing it for your students.
Student Self-Progress Tracker (cont.)

Name: 

Class Year: 

Certificate Program Semester: 

Contact Email: 

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<tr>
<th>Workshop Attended</th>
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Resume submitted for review

Date: ____________________________

Staff Signature: ____________________________

Resume returned:

Date: ____________________________

Staff Signature: ____________________________
Program Evaluation Questionnaire

To ensure that your students are reaping as much value as possible from your certificate program, and to confirm that you are using your available programming and resources as efficiently as possibly, we recommend distributing a survey, like the one on the next page, to international students immediately upon receipt of their certificate.

The feedback that you receive from them can be used to adjust the offerings that you include as part of the certificate, improve individual components of the program, or make a case to other campus stakeholders for funding the program. It will also ensure that you are addressing student concerns as best you can, and increase the likelihood that students will recommend the program to their peer networks, creating greater buy-in and participation for the program going forward.
Program Evaluation Questionnaire (cont.)

Questionnaire for Certificate Program Participants

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our certificate program. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below. Let us know what about the program was helpful and what we could do differently to better prepare you for your job search.

1. Do you feel more confident and prepared for your job search after completing this program?
   Yes ___  No ___

2. Do you feel that this program provided sufficient preparation for your job search?
   Yes ___  No ___

3. What were the most helpful elements of the program?

4. What were the least helpful elements of the program?

5. What was missing from the program that you think would benefit students in the future?

6. Was the timing and scheduling of program events convenient with your academic schedule? Why or why not?

7. What are the most important lessons you learned throughout the course of the program?

8. Please record any other comments below.
Collaborative Campus Programming

Two of the biggest hurdles institutions face in connecting international students to mental health and counseling services are a lack of awareness about these services and the stigma attached to them. To combat both of these obstacles, consider developing collaborative programming with other campus partners. Programming should reach students where they are and use informal, non-threatening interactions to educate them about the realities of using these services.

Identify Opportunities on Campus for Collaborative Programming

Consider where existing campus programming may be leveraged to incorporate education and awareness building around counseling services and common adjustment issues. Options include informal sessions or meals at orientation, global coffee hours or other social events on campus, ISSO programming and events, academic workshops, and student organization events. Brainstorm some options on your campus below:

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Prioritize Topics to Address with Students

Consider what topics you want to cover with international students, based on the trends you are seeing on your campus and your student demographics. Often, students may not realize that they could benefit from counseling for issues they consider part of the general adjustment process, such as academic stress, homesickness, cultural differences, language difficulties, social isolation, and time management. Also consider how to incorporate information about counseling services themselves—the cost, confidentiality, and potential benefits may be unknown to international students.

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Determine Who Is Best Suited to Deliver These Messages

Choose who will represent your campus or office at on campus programming. We recommend using a certified counselor so that they can not only speak knowledgeably about the services offered, but also identify students who may be in great need of help. Consider which members of your staff or department has the time and resources to participate in this programming and who will be best equipped to handle the conversations and any issues that may arise.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Organizing a Campus Wellness Day

Institutions must implement a range of initiatives to educate international students about important health and wellness themes and connect them with services. One such initiative to consider is a campus-wide Wellness Day, designed to reach a mass of students at once with a variety of information and education. This type of event can simultaneously increase student awareness about their physical and emotional well-being, clear up common misconceptions about services, and introduce students to the range of resources available on campus.

In developing a Wellness Day initiative on your campus, consider the following logistical issues, keeping your campus resources and demographics in mind:

Identify Campus Units to Participate

Invite campus units representing all facets of student wellness to participate. By expanding the focus of the event beyond mental health, there will be reduced stigma associated with participating and the institution will reach students with a more comprehensive range of services.

What campus units will you invite to participate? (Consider: counseling center, wellness education groups, student health services)

Determine an Optimal Time and Location

Optimize your Wellness Day by holding it when and where it will reach the most students. We recommend holding the event in mid-fall, which is late enough for students to have started identifying some challenges they’re facing but early enough to be of use in addressing them.

When deciding on a location, consider central campus locations that students may frequent already, such as the quad, the student center, or near a dining hall. This way, you may be able to reach not just students who intend to attend the fair, but also those whose interest is piqued as they walk by.

Where and when would be feasible to hold a Wellness Day at your institution?
Think Strategically About How to Market the Event

Make your Wellness Day more inviting and student-friendly by marketing it as an overall wellness and community event rather than solely as a mental health initiative. By emphasizing themes of physical wellness and raising some of the common adjustment issues international students often experience, students will feel more comfortable attending and being open to sharing the challenges they’re facing.

What channels and messaging will you use to get the word out about Wellness Day?

Incorporate Hands-On Activities

International students often find it intimidating to approach faculty and staff with questions, whether due to a language barrier, shame about the issues they’re facing, or different cultural perceptions of authority. Incorporating interactive and engaging activities (e.g., art contests or short quizzes with prizes) will reach students with education and information while driving engagement with campus units.

Wellness Day is also a valuable opportunity to provide onsite services to students, such as vaccines and mental health screenings. Providing streamlined versions of these traditional services will allow you to reach a broader population of students than you otherwise would.

What activities will you incorporate into Wellness Day? How will you engage students?

Leverage Peer Support

Peers have enormous influence over each other, particularly among international students. Inviting student groups focused on mental wellness, such as Active Minds or NAMI, or international student organizations will give the event credibility with students and give you an additional mouthpiece to communicate your message to international students.
Organizing a Campus Wellness Day (cont.)

Do you have a student organization or group of students at your institution that could support this effort?

Provide Follow-Up Support

Wellness Day should be the first touch point in an ongoing relationship between your international students and various wellness services on campus. By introducing the staff and services available to students on campus, you can prepare your international students to take better advantage of all that you have to offer them. This event can increase awareness, reduce stigma, and jump-start engagement with this often hard-to-reach student population.

In particular, this event can provide an opportunity to obtain contact information, disseminate important information to students, make referrals, and identify at-risk students.

How will you continue to engage your international students on an ongoing basis?
Stigma-Reduction Strategies

Our research uncovered strategies for bringing needed mental health services to students who may be wary of them. These strategies are especially helpful for international students, both because their experiences can be stressful and they often carry a burden of stigma against mental health treatment. Below, you will find information about launching the PHQ-9 and “Let’s Talk” programs at your school.

PHQ-9 Questionnaire

The PHQ-9 Questionnaire is a short mental health screening designed for primary care physicians to use with their patients. This system allows health care professionals to identify students who may need mental health care, because many patients will be more likely to visit the health clinic than the counseling office on campus. PHQ-9 has been successfully implemented in schools across North America through the National College Depression Partnership (NCDP). For more information on becoming a member of NCDP and implementing PHQ-9 on your campus, see their website: http://www.ncdp.nyu.edu/.

“Let’s Talk” Program

The “Let’s Talk” Program is a system of satellite counseling offices that was launched at Cornell University. Each satellite office is open for a few hours each week, located in a high-student-traffic area, and staffed by a trained college counselor. The counselor is available for short, walk-in conversations and will refer students to the main counseling center if applicable. “Let’s Talk” and related programs have been implemented by several schools across North America. You can learn more about “Let’s Talk” and find contact information for schools that have launched their own versions of the program at the “Let’s Talk Across the Nation” website: http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/cms/services/counseling/caps/talk/nation.cfm.
Crisis Response Audit I: Campus Collaboration

When a crisis strikes, administrators must react quickly. Yet when an international student is involved, special considerations could take administrators by surprise and delay their response. On the next few pages, we have outlined three special situations that may arise when responding to international students of concern and some steps you can take to prepare for them.

Prepare a Plan for Collaborating Across Campus

Collaborating with the campus behavioral intervention team and other stakeholders on campus can be difficult to achieve without a structured plan in place.

1. Does your campus have a behavioral intervention team or crisis response team?
   Yes ____  No ____

   If “Yes”, then continue to the rest of the tool below. If “No”, then move on to the next tool, Family Communication. If you are interested in launching a crisis response team on your campus, please consider reviewing the Student Affairs Forum’s 2012 study, Responding to Students of Concern.

1. How frequently does your BIT meet?

2. How frequently does your BIT interact with an international student, either as a student of concern or as a bystander or friend?

   ÷ _________

3. On average, how many BIT meetings would involve an international student?

   = _________

   **Every one to three meetings** = Your institution may want to consider adding a member of the ISSO staff to your BIT.

   **Every four or more meetings** = Your institution may not need to add a member of the ISSO staff to your BIT.
Crisis Response Audit II: Family Communication

During or after a crisis, you may encounter a need to communicate with the families of international students. In such a situation, language barriers present a common obstacle. Institutions typically designate particular staff members for contacting the family of a student in crisis. However, these staff members may not be able to speak the language of an international student’s family. Without a plan for proceeding, staff may find themselves scrambling to locate a translator while consulting institutional privacy policies. We identified three possible options for communicating with international families:

1. Hire counseling center staff with language skills
2. Recruit campus or community speakers
3. Hire an outside vendor

Would Option 1 (hire counseling center staff with language skills) be a good fit for your school?

1. Are your international students highly concentrated in one or two languages? If “Yes”, list languages on the lines below.
   
   Yes ___  No___
   Language 1: ________________________________
   Language 2: ________________________________

2. Do you currently have counseling center staff members who could speak to a student’s family about his or her case in those languages? If “Yes”, list a current staff person for each language on the lines below.
   
   Yes ___  No___
   Staff Person 1: ________________________________
   Staff Person 2: ________________________________

3. Do you anticipate hiring a new counseling center staff member soon, or could you request funds to do so?
   
   Yes ___  No___

4. Do you expect your international student demographics to remain relatively stable over the next few years?
   
   Yes ___  No___

*If you answered “Yes” to one or more of the above questions, then Option 1 may be a good fit.*

*If you answered “No” to all of the above questions, then Option 1 may not be a good fit for your institution. See the next pages to assess whether Options 2 or 3 may be a better fit.*
Crisis Response Audit II: Family Communication (cont.)

Would Option 2 (recruit staff, faculty, or community speakers) be a good fit for your school?

1. Are your international students highly concentrated in three or four languages? If “Yes”, list the languages on the lines below.

   Yes ____    No ____

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

2. Does your institution have staff or faculty members who speak these languages confidently enough to translate student case conversations and might be willing to do so? If “Yes”, list relevant individuals for each language on the lines below.

   Yes ____    No ____

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

3. Are you located in an area with local resources for members of these languages or cultures, such as embassies, international NPOs, religious organizations, or other nonprofit organizations? If “Yes”, list a relevant organization for each language on the lines below.

   Yes ____    No ____

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

If you answered “Yes” to two or more of the above questions, then Option 2 may be a good fit.

If you answered “No” to two or more of the above questions, then Option 2 may not be a good fit for your institution. See the next page to assess whether Option 3 may be a better fit.

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis.
Would Option 3 (hire outside vendor) be a good fit for your school?

In one year, about how many international student cases arise that require translation?

______________________________

Vendor service fees range from about $15 to $60 per 10-minute conversation. Cost varies according to the rarity of the language, with the least expensive languages being Spanish and Mandarin. Use this figure and your answer to the question above to estimate your annual cost of translation services. Record the estimate below.

______________________________

1. Based on your calculations above, would your office be able to cover these costs internally or request funding to cover them?
   Yes ____  No ____

2. Do your international students and their families currently represent a wide range of diverse languages?
   Yes ____  No ____

3. Do you anticipate a growing diversity of international students in the future? Could your office benefit from being more prepared to adapt to changing populations?
   Yes ____  No ____

If you answered “Yes” to two or more of the above questions, then Option 3 may be a good fit for your institution.

If you answered “No” to two or more of the above questions, then Option 3 may not be a good fit for your institution. See the previous pages to assess whether Options 1 or 2 may be a better fit.
Crisis Response Audit III: Campus Separation Logistics

Prohibitive Costs

Sometimes, international students may be unable to afford treatment or a trip home. In these cases, having an emergency fund in place can help prevent undue stress on students as they struggle to find alternative sources of funding. Some options for financing the emergency fund include:

- Donor drive
  - Suggest the emergency fund to major donors who aren’t sure how to help
  - Create a campaign that invites both students and alumni to make small donations to the fund
- ISSO Budget
- Student Affairs discretionary fund

Student Supervision

Occasionally, a student may need to leave campus but may also be unable to travel alone. This could happen to any student, but in the case of international students, the logistics become much more complicated. Students may need to travel long distances, and staff who are available to travel may have limited counseling experience. Preparing a plan for such situations can greatly streamline your office’s response while ensuring that the student receives high-quality care. The questions below can help you start a conversation with the appropriate stakeholders on your campus and work to develop a plan for these situations.

Would any current campus staff have the flexibility and training necessary to travel with the student? Options might include staff members from the counseling center, international student support office, or dean of students office.

If not, might your office have the resources to contract with an external vendor that provides supervising nurses or be able to petition for these resources?

What will be the protocol for contacting the designated supervising staff or nurse?

What will be the protocol for supervising the student prior to departure?